NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

November 2026 Volume 26, Issue 6 WWW.NODPA.COM

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Carli and Zack Moulton

FEATURE FARM: DAISY HILL FARM
WINDHAM, ME
Owned and operated by Zack and Carli Moulton

Organics: The Best Path to a Bright Future at Daisy Hill Farm

By Samantha Kemnah, NODPA Contributing Writer

Zack Moulton's first cow was named Daisy. He was 16 years old, and she was a freemartin heifer calf, a gift from the farmer he milked for. Zack didn't come from a farming family, but agriculture has always been his passion. As a child, he watched the neighboring farm's cows on their pasture outside his bedroom window, and he says they just "pulled him in." He began working on a local farm at 12 years old, helping with haying. Before he was out of high school, he could run every piece of equipment on the farm, and fix it, too. He started helping

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NODPA Has Supported Organic Dairy Farmers Since 2000. Now, We Need Your Support

For more than 25 years, NODPA has been a trusted voice for organic dairy farmers, providing independent information, valuable resources, and dedicated advocacy. Today, we are asking for your help to ensure that work continues.

Like the farms and families, we represent, NODPA faces rising costs for printing, postage, website maintenance, Odairy, and other essential services. While dedication and volunteer efforts go a long way, financial support is necessary to keep these resources available.

Your contribution helps NODPA continue delivering this bi-monthly publication, maintaining online resources, and providing honest, independent representation for organic dairy producers in industry and regulatory discussions.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Message from NODPA Co-President

Blessed and Thankful

Seems like we're getting toward that time of the year again that we count our blessings, and it's the fastest way I know of to become indecently rich. So, take stock of what you were blessed with this year, even if there was some difficulty, there's always something for blessing in that. For us, we had a tremendous year, with much better quality feed than last year. We are currently shipping a ton more milk a day than we were last year at this time. We're not feeding much feed yet, with cows still on pasture, and it looks like we have plenty of good forage on hand for winter feed supply. We have lots of stockpiled feed to graze in the winter which has worked beautifully in the past. Even with heavy snowfall.

On another note, most of you missed the NODPA Field Days. That's very unfortunate because we had two good farm tours and many good speakers. But there is always another year and if you have suggestions about speakers or about when to have it that would be better than the last full week in September, text me or call and suggest it to Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator, 413-772-0444. Good Field Days don't just happen. Field Days take planning and effort and they are a good way for us to raise awareness and funds for what we do. So, think carefully about where you see the Organic dairy industry going in the next five years, 10 years or 20 years. Do you want it to be better for your children? And grandchildren? If so, that also takes planning, effort, and gratefulness for what we already have, including the NODPA News. It has many articles and always has a featured farm article that spotlights an interesting organic dairy farm family you can learn from; it has advertisers that cater to your industry; and feed and cattle for sale. There are many articles and advantages to make the work you do more efficient. So read carefully our fundraising letter, in this issue, and think carefully about how you can contribute to a good cause…, and how that cause can help you make better decisions in the future and be more blessed.

Text me how you were blessed this year. I would love to hear from you, so text or call me, 717-278-1070.

Roman Stoltzfoos

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Dairy News: November 2026

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

2026 will go down as a good, if not great, year for forage and grazing for most of the Northeast and mid-Atlantic. Hay inventory has been rebuilt and Pay Price has remained stable. As we head into 2027, we will hopefully hear from milk buyers about plans for a 2027 Pay Price, and how much the high cost of trucking plays into their algorithms; we know it is directly affecting producer's bottom line.

At the producer meeting at NODPA Field Days in September, there was discussion around the potential for more marketing of organic dairy, especially around protein, butterfat (Omega3 vs Omega 6), the fat/protein ratio and the benefit of Lactose free. Producers discussed the role of A2A2 milk and the organic 100% Grass Fed certification. Enforcement will remain a topic forever, especially with a shortage of milk which historically has triggered transition of larger herds to organic, currently happening now in Maine, New York, and the West. Where there is money to be made, there will be the temptation to bend the rules to transition quicker.

Regenerative Is Not Organic; Certified Organic Is the Gold Standard of Regenerative Agriculture

With growth of organic fluid milk sales stalled and average retail price leveling out at around $5 per half gallon, organic producers need to be aware of the increased corporate and government interest in regenerative labels as a short cut to the consumer who want products 'that benefit nature.' "Regenerative dairy sales have surged 75% this past year, according to SPINS (a syndicated retail data provider), demonstrating that sustainable farming practices drive consumer demand and retail growth," writes Melissa Kvidahl Reilly, on the New Hope Network. It used to be that 'sustainable' was the buzz word, or non-bovine milks/beverages the new shiny object. Now regenerative is. By 2030, Market Research Future predicts major food and beverage companies, including PepsiCo, Nestlé, and Unilever, are projected to have committed to converting over 15 million acres to regenerative farming methods. What does that even mean?!?!

This administration has taken 'regenerative' and promoted it with many grants through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Organic farmers already do the conservation work the NRCS exists to support. But as the agency reorganizes, the programs and funding built for them are disappearing. The organic community is its own worse enemy when it also promotes regenerative practices without the all-important organic as the basis of the certification. Add-on labels like 'Real Organic' and 'Grass Fed' take the organic certification as a baseline with more requirements, as does the Regenerative Organic Certified. All the surveys and research tell us that consumers trust organic certification more than any other claim; with good reason. Producers work hard to maintain their certification; the organic community needs to stand behind them and call out regenerative claims for what they are and what they lack. Pragmatically, how much room is there in the dairy case for competing, more expensive products that are good for you?

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) was formed through cooperative agreements between the USDA and non-profit organizations and invested $100 million from 2022-2026 to provide technical assistance and support for transitioning and existing organic farmers. The TOPP initiative ended on September 30, 2026, though participating organizations plan to continue providing support for new and transitioning farmers where they can, but at a reduced level. To provide support in mentoring, the Arizona State University's Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems formed Kernel, which will carry forward some of TOPP's work. The program is led by Swette Center Executive Director Kathleen Merrigan, a longtime organic agriculture leader and native of Franklin County, Massachusetts. Nationwide, through farmer-to-farmer mentorship, Kernel helps farmers, ranchers, and handlers transition to organic production and earn USDA Organic certification. It aims to expand organic production and strengthen the domestic organic food industry. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, https://www.grow-organic.org/mentor or a mentee, https://www.grow-organic.org/mentee or to find out more information: https://www.grow-organic.org/

Don't forget about the **Organic Certification Cost Share Program** (OCCSP). FSA county offices are currently accepting and processing applications. The updated OCCSP application form was published on Monday, July 6, 2026. The application deadline for both 2025 and 2026 is **December 31, 2026**.

Mixed news for producers who signed up for **Dairy Margin Coverage** in 2026: The USDA report released on Aug. 31st, established July's margin as $9.93 per cwt, supported by both an all-milk price and total feed cost that were better than predicted. The August 2026 margin was $9.34 which triggered payment for dairy operations that elected Tier 1 margin coverage level of $9.50. September margin was $8.35/cwt., triggering a payment. **Enrollment for the 2027 Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Program runs from October 5 through December 18, 2026.** To Apply: Contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to submit your application and choose your coverage level.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

In the court battle over organic fluid milk's status within the FMMO, handlers secured a rare victory on August 25, 2026. USDA AMS promptly appealed, prolonging the costly legal proceedings and paperwork. The ultimate winner remains uncertain—probably not producers, though the lawyers are unlikely to lose. The Coalition for Organic Dairy Exemption (CODE) made up of CROPP, Horizon and Aurora Dairy, received a mixed decision on August 25, 2026 from the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Tierney Carlos on their challenge to the federal government's application of Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMOs) to organic dairy (https://nodpa.com/n/9212/Organic-Dairy-News-July-2025). The ALJ ordered that organic handlers shall be exempted from the Final Rule released January 2025 that amends uniform pricing formula provisions and skim milk composition factors across the 11 Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMO), which was a result of the FMMO Hearings in 2024. Effectively, that takes organic out of the FMMO. He also ruled unfavorably for the other two claims about that process that CODE made in their petition. A spokesperson for CODE said they were encouraged by the ruling but it begins a lengthy legal process. USDA appealed to the Judicial Officer on September 24, 2026 about the ruling in favor of CODE; at the same time CODE has appealed several adverse rulings. The very simplified basis of the USDA AMS appeal is: *"The AMAA (Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937) speaks only to milk and does not provide any authority for the Secretary or the ALJ to differentiate between types of raw milk, much less exempt an entire group of handlers who purchase and process an allegedly specialized type of raw milk. In other words, under the AMAA, milk is milk."* The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) also moved to intervene and filed a brief supporting AMS's appeal. NMPF has also intervened in the Colorado and Wisconsin district courts' constitutional cases (the 15Bs), and moved to intervene in the organic dairy farmers' Court of Federal Claims case. Now that DFA is involved through NMPF, the process is likely to be even longer. DFA has said that they do not want any members who are organic and asked those who are to leave on their anniversary date.

USDA

On October 13, 2026, District Judge Vince Chhabria temporarily halted USDA's reorganization plan after lawmakers, federal employee unions, and advocacy groups warned it would undermine the department's work and reduce its workforce. The reprieve could be brief if Congress renews its support for the reorganization after statutory funding restrictions expire on December 9, 2026. The decision doesn't stop USDA from shuttering offices in the capital area, such as the South Building, which officials said earlier this year they intend to sell, or from moving employees within the region. "It's worth emphasizing that the temporal scope of this relief could end up being quite short," Chhabria wrote in his ruling. "If the agency wishes to move forward with its plans to close offices and relocate employees, it will soon have the opportunity to convince Congress of the merits of those plans."

USDA has been ordered to postpone the effective date of staff reassignments or relocations and closure or consolidation of any Agricultural Research Service laboratory or facility, including the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, while the legal case continues. The stay also applies to USDA's Food & Nutrition Administration, Forest Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Research, Education & Economics mission area, Rural Development mission area and Farm Production & Conservation mission area.

House Ag ranking member Angie Craig (D-Minn.), who has criticized Rollins for not getting Congress' sign-off for the reorganization, said the decision reaffirmed her stance that USDA must get lawmakers' approval to overhaul its structure. Democrats on the ag committees have widely bashed the project, dimming its chances for a congressional go-ahead next year if they gain majorities.

Farm Bill

Negotiations on the 2026 Farm Bill continue as Congress heads into the lame duck session after the mid-term elections. Over the recess, leaders of the Senate and House Agricultural committee have been meeting in preparation for what will be a packed agenda when Congress returns on November 9th. Lawmakers will face a busy legislative agenda, including unfinished business involving federal spending, national defense, infrastructure programs, and potentially tax and regulatory legislation. Congress must pass the remaining FY 2027 appropriations bills or another continuing resolution before the December 11th deadline to avoid a federal government shutdown. The previously extended 2018 Farm Bill officially expired on September 30, 2026. Without a replacement or a new extension by December 31, 2026, many agricultural programs risk reverting to outdated 1930s and 1940s permanent statutes. If a Farm Bill or Continuing Resolution (CR) is not passed, it triggers a "dairy cliff" as agricultural policy legally reverts to a baseline "permanent law" established by the Agricultural Act of 1949 and Parity Pricing with a conventional Pay Price of $49-$65/cwt. NODPA, and many others, opposes the proposed Farm Bill (https://nodpa.com/n/9280/The-2026-Farm-Bill-Risks-but-No-Rewards-The-2026-Farm-Bill-Agricultural-Act-of-2026-and-its-provisions-to-establish-Risk-Based-Certification-is-not-what-Organic-Producers-need-or-want). ◆

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The 26th Annual NODPA Field Days, September 24-25, 2026, Leesport, PA

Hope for the Future: Strategies for Success: A Meeting Summary

By Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator

The 26th Annual NODPA Meeting and Field Days, was held at the Berks County Agricultural Center in Leesport, PA, at the end of September. The venue was ideal, with support from the Center staff, perfect electronics and plenty of parking. The weather was excellent, if a bit chilly, so attendees were able to fully enjoy the two farm tours. Everyone was treated to homemade donuts (the best donuts ever) and cookies made by AnnaMary Martin, the matriarch at Nelson Martin's family farm, Country Sunrise Creamery, Meyerstown. There, Nelson, insisting that his farm was 'nothing special' modestly described his operation which included many innovative practices such as virtual fencing, silvopasture plantings, and mixed grazing-cows and goats, as well as his philosophy on taking risks on innovative practices-some succeed and some fail, but all teach him important lessons. Attendees returned to the meeting site full of excitement and information about the Martin's farm, noting that they'd learned so much. To learn more about the Martin's farm tour, please read Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner's Lancaster Farming article, *Grass-Fed Farmer Favors Outside-the-Box Ideas — And Cows*, on page 8.

The educational program got underway after lunch on Thursday, with Dr. Van Saun, professor of Veterinary Medicine at Penn State, describing the importance of minerals and vitamins in herd health, especially focused on how proper feeding late-term cows and newborn calves is essential for minimizing disease conditions of mastitis and uterine infections. His session was followed by Joshua Greene, Director of Education, Trees for Graziers, who described the reasoning for adding trees to actively grazed pasture, and expanded on the challenges and opportunities in doing so. It was great that attendees saw Nelson Martin's silvopasture pastures earlier in the day. Roman Caraman gave us a personal update on the USDA-AMS Marketing Services explaining how he values the information he receives from producers and producer groups; Amber Donaldson updated us on the DGA program; while Jacki Perkins, MOFGA Organic Dairy and Livestock Specialist, spoke about the TOPP program.

Attendees had time to meet the Trade Show vendors during the social hour, and snacked on delicious Organic Raw Cheddar cheese



from the Stoltzfoos' Springwood Organic Dairy, Kinzer, PA, and a variety of cheeses from Organic Valley. Thanks to all of the vendors for contributing to a robust trade show! The NODPA Annual Meeting and banquet followed. Kathryn's Katering, Blandon, PA provided delicious food for all and were a delight to work with.

Ted LeBow, CEO of Good Roots, gave a lively, interactive keynote presentation entitled *Stop Farming Like You'll Never Leave: Rethinking Profit, Reinvestment, and Retirement* that engaged the audience and farmer panel with his usual interactive style. People responding to his questions were delighted when they received cash for their answers! Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner's Lancaster Farming article *Off-Farm Investments Can Be Part of Transition Planning*, on page10 details Ted's excellent keynote presentation.

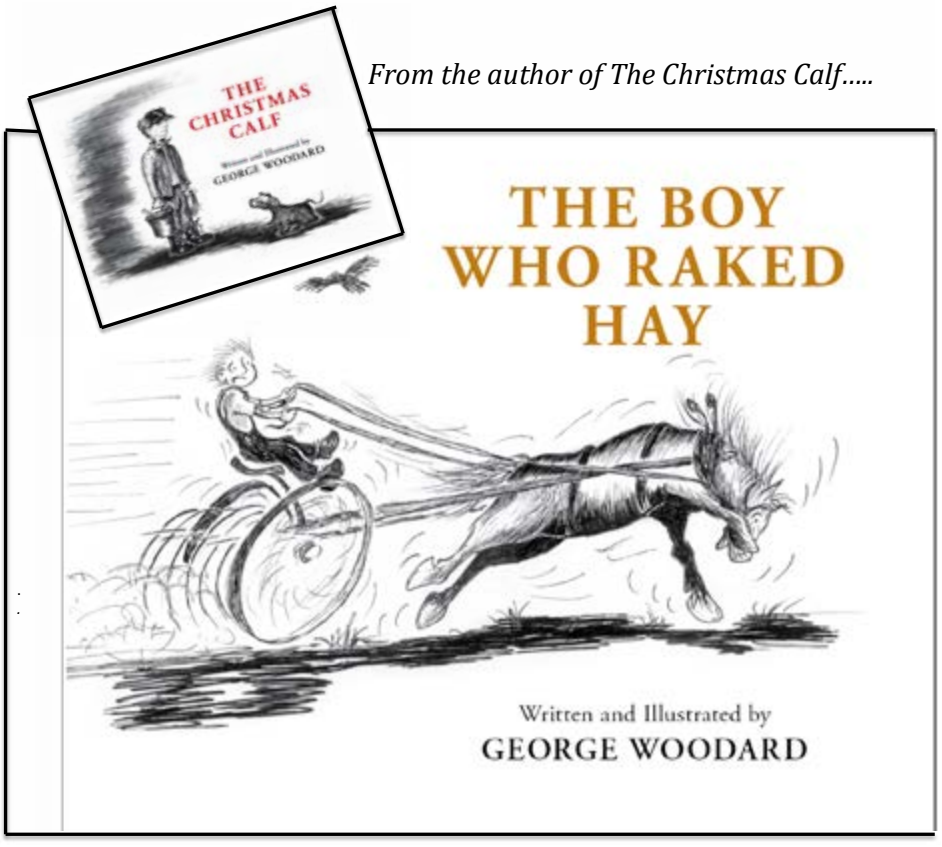
On Friday morning, the Producer-Only meeting there was discussion about goals for NODPA in the coming year, increased marketing of organic milk products, with an emphasis on protein, grass-fed, A2A2, and more; and the addition of Christopher Kemnah, organic dairy farmer from upstate NY, as a new NODPA board member. Welcome Chris!

Following the private producer meeting, Klaas Marten started the public educational program by describing the innovative, money saving energy projects on his farm that can be replicated on any farm. His presentation was followed by Penn State's Drs. Leoni Martin and James Lawhead, DVM session on *From Pasture to Profit: how grazing management decisions drive intake, milk yield and efficiency*. They discussed how having continuous planning and evaluation discussions about grazing impacts forage quality and quantity, cow behavior, and how these translate into higher milk yields, better animal health, and greater farm profit.

Just before lunch, Greg and Forrest Stricker gave an introduction to Spring Creek Farm, Wernersville, PA, ahead of their afternoon tour. As one of the pioneers of organic and grass based dairies in the US, Greg Stricker described the farm, their innovative practices, and the successful process of the generational transfer of the farm operation. Forest Stricker has been a longtime supporter of NODPA and you can read more about their operation in the article in the March 2026 issue of the NODPA News.

Following lunch and the ever-popular door prize drawing, with terrific prizes donated by trade show vendors and Field Days supporters. The meeting ended and everyone was off to the final farm tour at the Strickers. ◆

From the author of The Christmas Calf.....



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Grass-Fed Farmer Favors Outside-the-Box Ideas — And Cows

By Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner, Lancaster Farming

This article is reprinted with permission of the author and Lancaster Farming

The lane to Country Sunrise Creamery ends with farm-bottled raw cow's milk, but what's along the way is more unpredictable, from a rainbow herd of cows and heifers to bulls, chestnuts and maybe a goat.

The GPS-fenced multispecies herd grazed in a silvopasture field is the result of some of the adjustments the Martin family is making to build the farm for the third generation to enter.

"It's different than it was 10 years ago, and I don't know what the next 10 years are going to hold," second-generation owner Nelson Martin said.

Martin and his family hosted members of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance for a farm tour Sept. 24 as part of the group's 2026 field days. Though not certified, Country Sunrise Creamery implements a number of organic practices. Martin joked that his son had asked if the NODPA knew the farm was nothing special. But the operation is changing, rolling with adaptations following its former hauler's ultimatum to either quit selling raw milk or leave the co-op. It was then, a decade ago, the family decreased the herd and switched to grazing 105 acres. They sell milk at the on-farm store, farmers markets and some other vendors.

The cows, once a Holstein herd, are now mixed. "There's just about every other color and stripe through here," Martin said. His original motivation was to raise more resilient animals, so he bought a Pinzgauer bull, a multi-purpose breed common in Europe.

"When you have a Holstein calf on the ground, it's going to do better if you take care of it," Martin said. "You have a Pinzgauer calf, it might consider you to be in the way of it surviving."

Since then, the farm has also had Jersey, Dexter and Norwegian Reds, but the current bull is Holstein, chosen more for the animal than the breed.

Martin has always prioritized strength and milk as much as other preferences.

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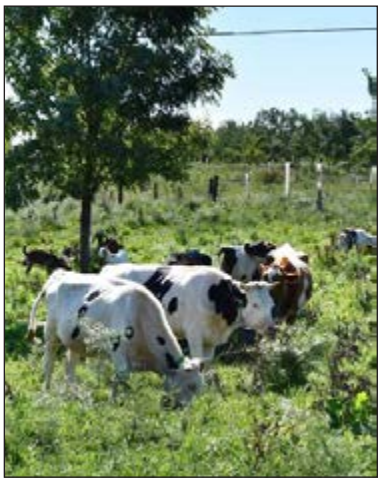
"It's easy to breed away the will to milk," he said.

Other changes include planting trees in pastures for animal comfort and harvest.

"Adding trees adds resilience to your operation," he said.

Trees offer wind protection, shade and another layer of sunlight capture, in addition to any wood, nut or fruit.

But silvopasture needs to be done correctly so trees can grow successfully and to prevent conflict, such as too much shade from dense trees, like maples.



Chestnuts were planted in hopes of becoming another venture for Martin's children, who are in different stages of considering their career aspirations.

"We're looking to stack enterprises here," he said. "We can't buy a farm for each child, but maybe we can give them an opportunity to lean into somewhere."

Goats are another opportunity showing promise, but the family currently only has eight head.

"The potential is there so much so that I wouldn't mind expanding to sheep," Martin said.

The goats are grazed alongside the cattle, which are moved regularly with GPS collars, a technology Nelson is still unsure about.

Advantages include easy, precise movement of paddocks, but getting the animals in for milking can be a challenge.

"If we had a mobile milking parlor—," Martin said, trailing off.

The collars can also lose signal under tree cover.

The system also has a learning curve for the animals. Some handle it better than others — and some know how to push the limits better. "Cows aren't created equal," Martin said.



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Martins have 140 ruminants on the farm, but they're only milking 35 cows. The rest of the cattle include beef and replacements, which they've been increasing over the past two years as part of a remodel and expansion effort.

The family also added a chicken house, stocking 80,000 layers in March.

Martin was hesitant to start the endeavor at first, but motivated by a son with partial ownership in the stocking company — Rushtown Poultry LLC — he built the house.

"When God opens a door that you have to walk through, he'll give you the strength to walk through it, but I didn't want to walk through that door right away," he said.

So far, he's been pleased by the manure benefits for the pastures, and he's experimenting to capitalize on those further.

He plans to start composting some of the litter with used cow bedding to strengthen its abilities further, and he is seeking permission from Rushtown to feed the chickens biochar to get that included in the manure.



Nelson Martin and his son, Burnell, host a farm tour for NODPA Field Days.

Not all of Martin's experiments have panned out, like when horns left on calves ended with repeat animal injuries, but the family's management is guided by a goal and a willingness to see what works to get there.

"We don't know how it'll turn out, but we know if we don't plant any trees, then we won't have any nuts," he said. ◆

Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner can be reached at rschweitzer@lancasterfarming.com

Off-Farm Investments Can Be Part of Transition Planning: Investing Money Off the Farm, Not Just Back Into it, May Be What Allows an Operation to Succeed for Generations to Come

By Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner, Lancaster Farming

This article is reprinted with permission of the author and Lancaster Farming

Ted LeBow, the founder and CEO of agricultural business consulting firm Good Roots, shared his "couch potato investing" strategy among other transition planning tips Sept. 24 during the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance field day.

He thinks every farmer should invest outside the farm in an account for their own retirement and in another account for the next generation.

He recommended a "set it and forget it" method where funds are budgeted into these accounts from the farm business on a monthly basis to capitalize on compounding interest, which can help individuals reach seven-figure values if started early enough.

"That accumulation of $1.6 million is the difference between many people being able to retire or not without having to sell the asset that they've reinvested in for so long or sell it to a child for a market rate," LeBow said.

Beyond retirement plans, of which LeBow recommended a Roth 401(k), he said simple index funds and life insurance policies can help ensure one generation can retire and the next can keep farming — especially when an inheritance for nonfarming kids is a consideration.

One couple Good Roots worked with needed a transition plan for their nine children, of whom seven did not want to farm.

Two of the boys had come back to the farm early in adulthood and had been putting in sweat equity, but the parents didn't want to leave nothing to the others. They instead took out a $1 million life insurance policy, paid for by the farm, to be split among the seven nonfarming children while the two boys kept the farm.

That method, LeBow said, recognizes the commitment the sons had already made and the effort they'll need to continue to put in, even if inheritance values aren't even.

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"If you sell that farm, your legacy goes away. Gone. Poof," LeBow said. "You're not going to keep farming. If your child wants to keep farming, there is a fairness to the amount of investment of time that person is going to have to make in order to continue that lifestyle and to continue your legacy."

LeBow was joined at the conference by a panel of farmers in different stages of the transition process.

On that panel, New York dairy farmer Madeline Poole suggested that parents talk to the non-farming children to find out what they expect. In Poole's situation, one transition mediator had proposed she pay rent to her three siblings, despite having bought the farm from her parents. Her siblings didn't want her to have to pay rent.

As for other investment options for the next generation, one audience member said they started paying their children when they began milking at age 7, but the kids had to put 10% into a Roth IRA and 10% in savings.

The attendee said some of his kids left the farm at 18, but they were able to do so with $15,000 or so.

Alongside investing, LeBow shared his strategies for successful succession planning.

Communicate early and often, he said. Setting up a cadence for that communication should foster a relationship where disagreements can be aired confidently.

The older generation should own the plan but be willing to start slowly handing over the reins. They should also make sure the farm is financially strong and able to address their financial security post-succession.

Families need to be prepared to pay for help with the succession where needed. Most people transition a farm only once in their lives, and the learning curve is too great to figure it out alone, LeBow said.

Sometimes help also means family therapy, he said.

LeBow recommended building an organizational chart to understand who answers to whom in the business and what responsibilities each individual holds.

LeBow's final tip is to consider taxes and to work with an expert to navigate those throughout planning.

"I'm happy to pay taxes when I make a profit, but if I pay taxes because I made a mistake in the way that I'm conducting my business, I don't want to do that," LeBow said. ◆

Rebecca Schweitzer-Benner can be reached at rschweitzer@lancasterfarming.com



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Temporary Variance Guidance and Form

Guidance and worksheet for organic producers requesting a temporary variance from the USDA National Organic Program (NOP)

This fact sheet was produced by Organics Farmers Association, Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance and NODPA, working with the USDA National Organic Program

Occasionally, circumstances beyond an operation's control, such as drought or flooding, or on-farm research, may temporarily make compliance with certain organic requirements impossible.

In these situations, NOP regulations allow a temporary variance from specific production or handling requirements for a specified period. Temporary variances are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis by the NOP. They are not automatic, and producers should never assume they have a variance until the NOP approves it through their certifier. You may qualify, even if your neighbor does not. This guidance explains when a temporary variance may be appropriate and how to request one through your organic certifier.

WHAT IS A TEMPORARY VARIANCE?

A temporary variance is a temporary allowance to deviate from certain USDA organic requirements because of circumstances beyond the operation's control or to accommodate on-farm research.

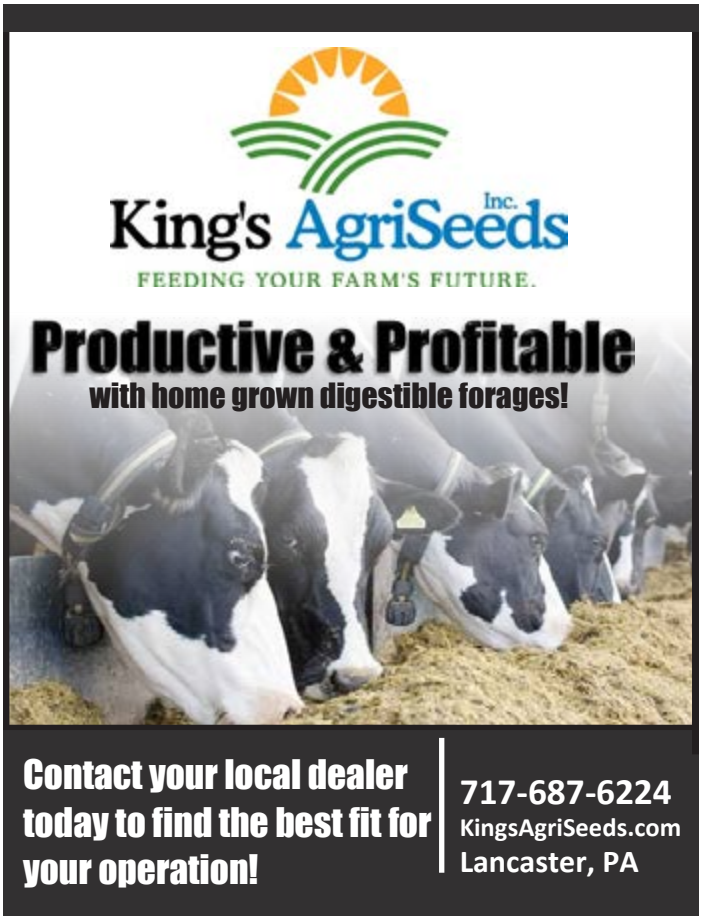
The NOP may grant a temporary variance only for specific reasons identified in the organic regulations. Examples include:

1. Natural disasters declared by the Secretary of Agriculture.
2. Damage caused by drought, flooding, excessive moisture, wind, hail, tornado, earthquake, wildfire, or other business interruption.
3. Practices used for the purpose of conducting research or trials of techniques, varieties, or ingredients used in organic production or handling.

WHAT DOES NOT QUALIFY?

Temporary variances apply only to certain sections of the USDA organic regulations (§§ 205.203-205.207, 205.236-205.240, or 205.270-205.272). They cannot be granted for prohibited practices or materials, including using prohibited substances or feeding nonorganic feed





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to certified organic livestock. They also cannot be granted to fix noncompliance, nor can they be used for cost or size reasons.

Applicable USDA Organic Regulations (7 CFR § 205)
§ 205.203 Soil fertility and crop nutrient management
§ 205.204 Seeds and planting stock practice standard
§ 205.205 Crop rotation practice standard
§ 205.206 Crop pest, weed, and disease management
§ 205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard
§ 205.236 Origin of livestock
§ 205.237 Livestock feed
§ 205.238 Livestock health care practice standard
§ 205.239 Livestock living conditions
§ 205.240 Pasture practice standard
§ 205.270 Organic handling requirements
§ 205.271 Facility pest management practice standard
§ 205.272 Commingling and contact with prohibited substance prevention practice standard
§ 205.290 Temporary Variances

WHEN SHOULD YOU CONTACT YOUR CERTIFIER?

Contact your certifier as soon as you learn that an event or prolonged weather situation (i.e., drought, flooding) may prevent your operation from complying with an organic requirement.

This process can be precautionary or submitted in anticipation of not meeting the standards. You cannot request a variance after you have been unable to meet the regulations (non-compliance).

Early communication allows your certifier to discuss your situation, determine whether a temporary variance for your operation may be appropriate (even if others in the same county or State have not applied), and advise you on the documentation needed to support your request for submission to the NOP.

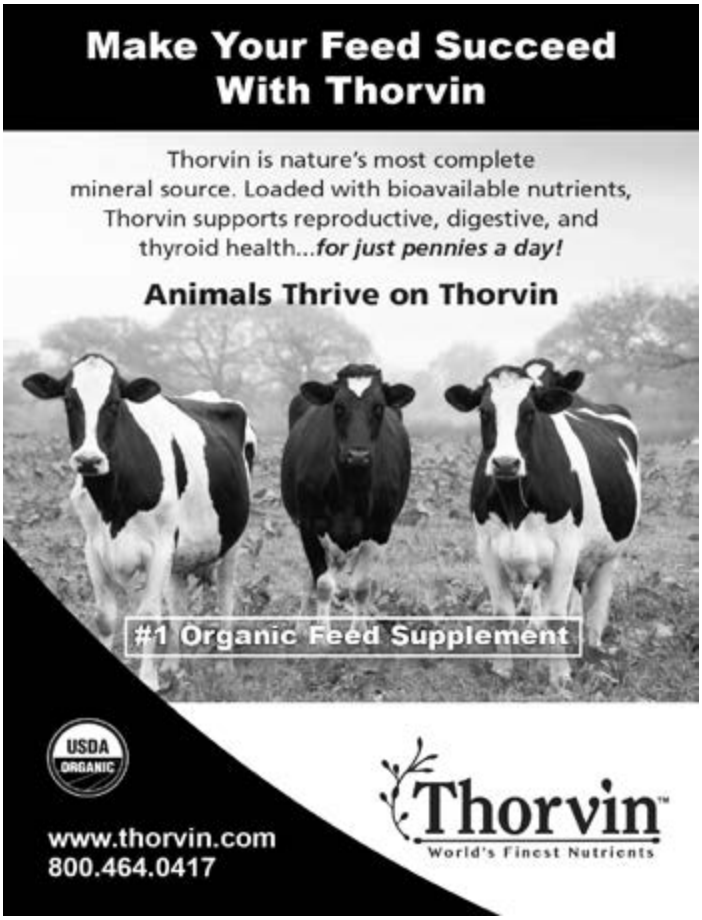
Do not wait until your annual inspection or the end of the production season if compliance is already being affected.

HOW DOES THE TEMPORARY VARIANCE PROCESS WORK?

The general process is:

1. Producer/handler submits a written request to their certifier* describing the situation and providing supporting documentation. (The worksheet is located at the bottom of the online article https://nodpa.com/n/9273/Temporary-Variance-Guidance--Form.)
2. The certifier reviews the request and determines whether it supports recommending a temporary variance.
3. If appropriate, the certifier submits a written recommendation to NOP including supporting documentation.





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4. The NOP reviews the recommendation within 5 business days of receipt for completeness and contacts the certifier if it needs additional supporting documentation or information. Within 10 business days of receipt, the NOP evaluates the certifier's recommendation against the allowed reasons for a variance. The NOP then recommends a decision to the AMS Administrator to grant or deny the temporary variance.
5. The certifier notifies the operation of the Administrator's decision.
6. The NOP publishes the temporary variance to the NOP webpage.

*Operations in California may request a temporary variance from their certifier or the State Organic Program

Only the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) Administrator can establish a temporary variance or extend it. Only a certifier can apply to the NOP as the first step in requesting a variance. Producers are encouraged to work with their certifier throughout the process.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

Your certifier may have their own worksheet or required documentation for submitting a variance request. The first step for any producer or handler is to contact their certifier and ask what information or forms they require.

If your certifier does not have a specific worksheet available, the worksheet and information found at this link, https://nodpa.com/n/9273/Temporary-Variance-Guidance--Form can guide you as you get started. A complete, detailed request will help your certifier evaluate the situation and ensure the NOP has the information needed to review and decide on the variance request.

YOUR REQUEST SHOULD INCLUDE:

Description of the Event

1. What happened?
2. When did it occur?
3. How long has the situation affected your operation?
4. Is the event ongoing?
5. Examples include drought, flooding, wildfire, excessive rainfall, severe storms, infrastructure damage, or other business interruptions.

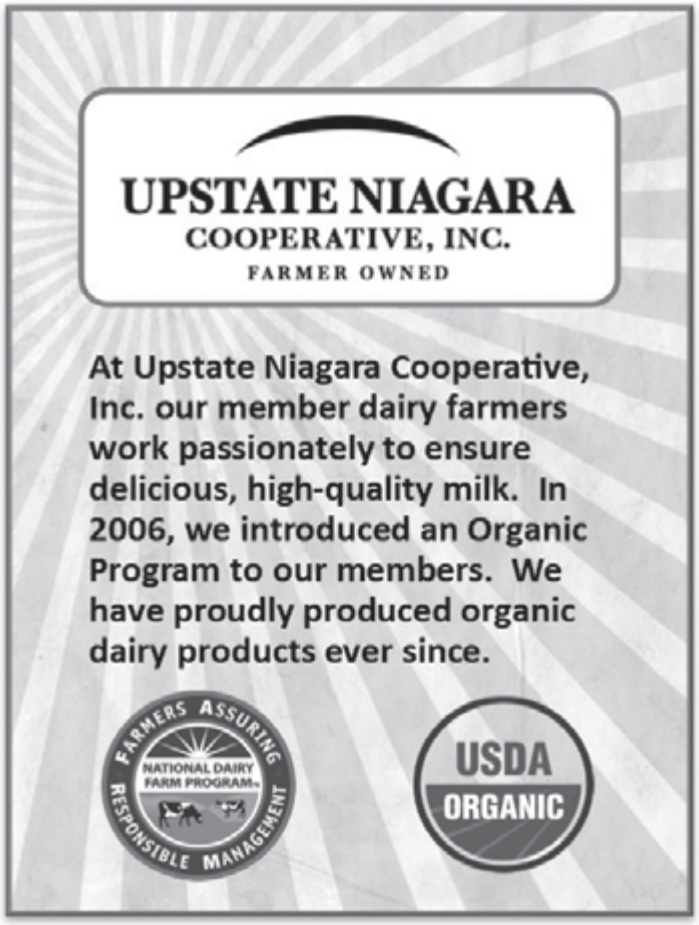
Organic Requirement Affected

1.Identify the specific organic requirement/regulation you cannot meet. Note: price is not an acceptable reason for not meeting the organic standards.

2.Examples may include:

- Crop production requirements
- Livestock grazing or pasture requirements





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- Handling or processing requirements
- Other applicable production or handling requirements allowed under the temporary variance regulations

Impact on Your Operation

1. Clearly explain how the event/issue affects your ability to comply with the organic standard and what adaptation of the regulation you CAN meet.

Examples include:

- Reduced pasture production because of drought (specify # days on pasture and DMI%).
- Flooded fields that prevented planting, harvesting, or grazing.
- Damaged handling or storage facilities. iv. Loss of access to production areas.

Other circumstances directly related to the event/issue.

Whenever possible, include dates, measurements, acreage affected, livestock numbers, production records, or other objective information.

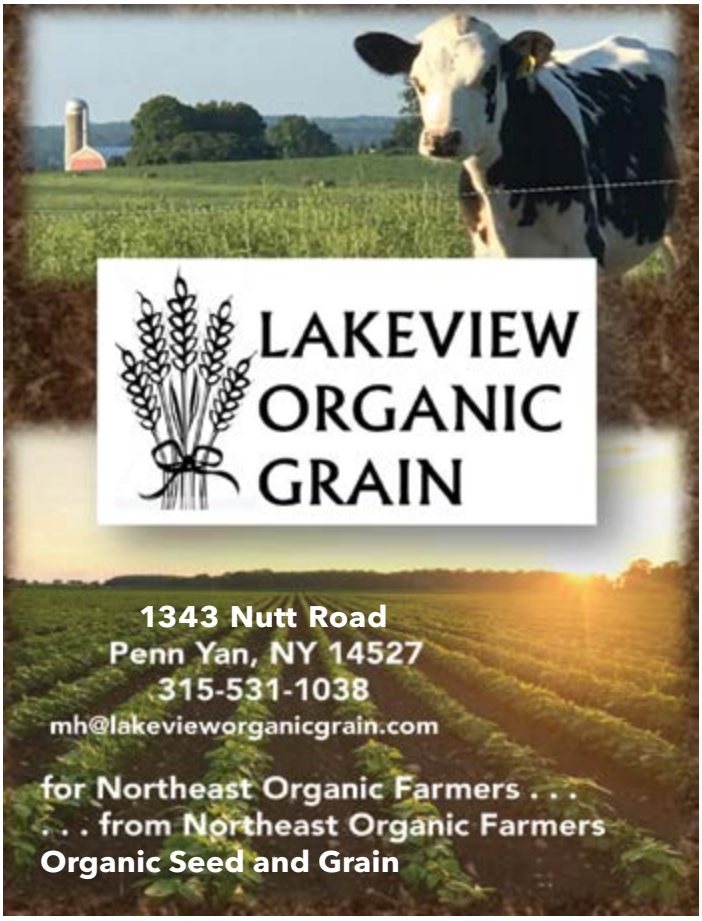
Supporting Documentation

1. The NOP relies on the submitted documentation to evaluate temporary variance requests. The more complete your documentation, the easier it is for your certifier and the NOP to understand your situation and decide on your temporary variance request.

2. Helpful documentation may include:

a) Local weather reports or weather station data
b) U.S. Drought Monitor information
c) Irrigation information, including water allotments
d) National Weather Service reports
e) County or state emergency declarations
f) Disaster Declarations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture
g) Photographs documenting conditions (Photographs taken throughout the event are especially helpful when documenting changing field or pasture conditions.)
h) Farm maps
i) Production records
j) Grazing records
k) Feed records
l) Harvest records
m) Organic System Plan records
n) Other records demonstrating how the event/issue affected your operation
o) Are there other organic operations in your region requesting a temporary variance?

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Ask the Vet

Dayna Locitzer, DVM



What should we have in our medical cabinets on our farms?

Stocking the medical cabinet on your farm is a vital aspect of keeping your cows healthy. There are emergency drugs that are important to have in critical situations. Additionally, there are supplies that you will need to treat sick animals that aren't urgent but organic versions are likely not supplied by your veterinarian. When a veterinarian is on your farm you want to make sure they have the supplies they need to treat your cow, and sometimes the organic version of what they need won't be on their truck. Organic certification wants the farms to know what they can and can't use, so it's best to be prepared for these situations in order for your cows to get the care they need in a timely manner. It is also important to note that organic regulations state that when an animal is in need of treatment with a non-organic approved product, they must be treated to ensure good animal welfare practices. This article is not exhaustive, but it is what comes up most often and therefore what comes to mind when writing.

I'll go over some emergency medications that you should have in your cabinet. It is important to review their use with your veterinarian and to make sure you are comfortable with how they are administered. The medications I have listed below are approved generally for organic, but make sure the specific brands you have are approved.

Flunixin Meglumine: This is the only medication approved for pain in lactating dairy cows. Read the label instructions on administration and take note that the organic withhold is two times the conventional. The injectable form of this must be given intravenously, please consult with your veterinarian about using it.

Epinephrine: While this medication has never actually been approved by the National Organic Standards Board, it is generally accepted for use. This is because it is for emergency use only in the case of severe allergic reaction. It must be used under the guidance of your veterinarian and you must check with your certifier that it can be used in these urgent circumstances.

Injectable electrolytes: This includes fluids like 23% Calcium, Hypertonic Saline, and Lactated Ringers.

Dextrose: This is a sugar solution used to treat ketosis. In those circumstances it should only be used intravenously. It can also be used for uterine infusions in cases of metritis. If given outside the vein it can cause infection around the vein.

Oral calcium supplement: These should be given to most cows after calving and should always be stocked in your cabinet.

Activated charcoal: This is for toxin ingestion, make sure the product you have is made from untreated wood in order to be organic approved.

Magnesium oxide pills: Also known as pink pills, this is to treat toxin ingestion or general indigestion.

I will reiterate, before using any of these medications consult your veterinarian for proper use and precautions. All of these above listed medications should be in your herd health protocols. Many farms are required to have these protocols through the FARM program, and if you do not, I highly recommend creating them with veterinarian guidance.

Now I'm going to move to treatments that you should have on your farm because your veterinarian likely doesn't have the organic version. I have been in this position on an organic farm and it is not fun. For example, I have arrived on a farm for a scouring calf. I know the calf needs electrolytes, the electrolytes I have on my truck are not organic approved and the farmer doesn't have an approved version. This calf then needs to wait for treatment. Because each certifier has different approved products, it is the responsibility of the farmer to have these important products that are in line with their specific certifier.

Calf Electrolytes: consult with your veterinarian about what products will be best designed to treat scours

Cow Electrolytes: These will be used for dehydrated, off feed, or generally sick cows and will be used with an oro-gastric pump that a veterinarian might have with them on their truck.

Activated Charcoal: A veterinarian will want to use this for toxin ingestion and the choices available from veterinary suppliers are usually not organic approved.

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Probiotics for cows and calves: We know digestion is the most important aspect of the health for our ruminants, so making sure you have a good probiotic to use will be valuable supportive care in getting your animals better. Do not rely on your veterinarian to have an approved probiotic.

Wound Spray: Organic certifiers are very specific with what wound sprays they allow. Though the organic wound spray might not appear different from the one on your vet's truck, certifiers have to approve each specific brand's version of wound spray.

Now I will move on to name a few items that I often recommend to have listed for organic health protocols. These may be different from the typical conventional protocol and therefore may not be carried by your veterinarian regularly.

An injectable multi-mineral: This is useful supportive care for sick animals and can help supplement free-choice minerals. It is important to use this with instruction from your veterinarian because you do not want to overdose on minerals. Be mindful there is a 21 day meat withhold on this product.

Bovi-sera: This is an antibody treatment that contains anti-bodies to common cow pathogens. Because we cannot use antibiotics in organic, it is helpful to boost the cow's immune system with the anti-bodies that will directly combat the pathogens she is confronting. This product has a 21 day meat withhold.

Garlic tincture: Many organic treatment protocols will call for garlic tincture. There are store bought tinctures made specifically for dairy cows. These have just garlic in them or some have additional medicinal herbs. You can also make your own garlic tincture. Garlic tincture should be given orally unless instructed otherwise under the guidance of a veterinarian and a milk withhold should be implemented due to the off flavor it might cause.

Herbal uterine flush: There are organic approved products available that are designed to be infused into the uterus for cases of retained placenta and metritis. They typically are an herbal formulation that will act against bacteria and help heal the lining of the uterus. Because you should be very careful when infusing anything into a uterus, please consult with your veterinarian about administration.

Injectable Vitamin C: There are a number of protocols where I recommend the use of Vitamin C, like calf scours and toxic mastitis. These expire fast and farmers should not expect their veterinarian to have it. If this is something that you have in your protocol, I recommend ordering it from veterinary suppliers.

This list is not complete, but I hope it is a start. I mainly did not mention specific products but rather categories so that you can do your own research into what brands are allowed by your certifier. I am happy to answer questions about the categories of products I listed and how you can best use them on your farm. Please ask your veterinarian about using these products so you can adhere to proper withhold times and correct and safe administration. I think when farmers are aware of the organic approved products they can use, it helps the veterinarians do their job more effectively. Each certifier is different in how they approve products and it is vital farmers know what those products are so they can treat their cows and help their veterinarian treat their cows. This was a difficult article to write because there is so much variation across certifiers, veterinarians, and farms but when in doubt, ask! ◆

Do you have a question for Dr. Locitzer, or an area you'd like her to focus on in future issue? Please send them to the NODPA News editor, noraowens@comcast.net who will share them with her.

Products for Your Organic Herd



- Feed Ingredients
- Pest Control
- Health Care

OMRI lists hundreds of products for organic livestock, all compliant. Look for the OMRI seal to know it's right for organics.

Free products search online!
OMRI.org/omri-search

OMRI LISTED

OMRI Listed – Naturally Trusted

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

continued from page 1

NODPA: Fighting for Organic Dairy Farmers for Over 25 Years

Our fundraising goal for the next 12 months is $20,000. With the support of our organic dairy community, this goal is within reach. A contribution of just $50 per year—or a few cents from each month's milk check— can make a meaningful difference. We cannot rely on a few to carry the burden; we need our entire community to come together.

NODPA has stood behind organic dairy farmers for over 25 years. With your support, we can continue standing together for years to come. Please consider contributing today. Every dollar makes a difference!

NODPA needs your support to continue advocating for organic dairy farmers, providing trusted information, and ensuring the next generation has a strong voice in the industry.



NOC Members meeting with Under Secretary Jenny Moffitt on March 24, 2023.

"Let Them Eat Grass!" At the 2006 National Organic Program (NOP) Organic Dairy Pasture Symposium, a Maine organic dairy farmer and NODPA founder proudly displayed a sign declaring, "Let Them Eat Grass!" Of course, he meant the cows—not the farmers or the people working tirelessly to protect their livelihoods!

That simple message helped define one of NODPA's greatest accomplishments: ensuring that grazing remains a fundamental requirement of organic dairy production. NODPA continues to monitor certifiers, work with the NOP, and advocate for consistent enforcement of organic grazing standards. These protections preserve the integrity of the organic label, maintain consumer trust, and safeguard the farmers who work hard to meet these standards every day.

Advocacy That Makes a Difference

The Pasture Rule. The Origin of Livestock Rule. A voice in Washington. These protections didn't happen overnight, and they didn't happen without determined advocates fighting for organic dairy farmers.

NODPA helped secure the Pasture Rule in 2010 and spent years advocating for the Origin of Livestock Final Rule, implemented in April 2023. When exemptions threatened to weaken those hard-fought protections, NODPA stood firm. These victories helped protect organic integrity, promoted fair competition, and defend family farms from those seeking to undermine the standards that make organic dairy valuable.

Today, NODPA continues advocating for consistent enforcement, fair and practical certification requirements, increased certification cost-share assistance, and stronger markets and infrastructure for organic dairy producers. If your farm or business benefits from these protections, you benefit from NODPA's work. And we need your help to keep that work going.

Policy May Not Be Exciting, But It Protects Your Livelihood

Most farmers would rather be tending their cows than following regulatory debates in Washington. We understand that. But because organic certification is federally regulated, decisions made in Washington directly affect your farm, your milk check, and your future. That's why NODPA shows up.

We've been called persistent, outspoken, and even a little sharp-elbowed. We wear those descriptions proudly because protecting organic dairy farmers sometimes means asking tough questions, challenging powerful interests, and refusing to back down. No matter who buys your milk, NODPA is fighting for you.

NODPA News: Independent Information Delivered to Your Door

Six times a year, NODPA News brings independent, trusted information directly to organic dairy farm families.

From milk pay prices, market conditions, and buyer updates to auction reports and classifieds, NODPA News provides information farmers can use. Our featured farm stories celebrate the families behind organic dairy, highlighting the different approaches, challenges, and successes that make this community special. Educational articles and our popular Ask the Vet column provides practical knowledge from experienced professionals who understand the realities of dairy farming. Whether you read every page, turn straight to your favorite column, or borrow your neighbor's copy, we hope you recognize the value of keeping this publication alive. Independent information matters, and keeping it in farmers' hands takes financial support.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

More Than a Newsletter: A Voice for Organic Dairy

NODPA's work extends far beyond the printed page. We maintain an active website, publish a bi-monthly e-newsletter, and support the Odairy listserv, connecting farmers and sharing timely information. For more than 20 years, we've attended National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meetings, submitted written and oral comments, worked alongside national organizations, and represented organic dairy producers whenever important decisions are being made. We do this because farmers deserve a strong, independent voice—one that puts their interests first.

Help Us Keep Fighting for You

For over 25 years, NODPA has stood alongside organic dairy farmers through changing markets, regulatory battles, and countless industry challenges. Much of this work happens quietly, behind the scenes, but its impact reaches farms across the country. The Board, State Representatives, many of the writers and editors of the NODPA News; many presenters at Field Days and many others who make NODPA work so valuable, do not receive any payments. In fact many of them contribute financially to NODPA.

Now, we need you to stand alongside NODPA.

Like the farms we represent, NODPA faces rising operating costs. Paying our bills, fairly compensating those doing the work, and bringing new people into this effort requires financial support. We cannot continue relying on the dedication of a few to serve the needs of so many. Every contribution, large or small, helps preserve independent information, defend organic standards, and ensure that organic dairy farmers continue to have a seat at the table. NODPA has spent decades fighting for your farm. Please help us continue that fight—for you, your family, and the next generation of organic dairy producers.

How You Can Support NODPA

Subscriptions

Subscribe to NODPA News for $50 annually and receive six issues by mail. Your subscription helps cover printing, mailing, organizational expenses, and contractor support. Subscriptions are invoiced each fall to minimize administrative costs and keep our focus on serving organic dairy producers.

continued on page 20

Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

By becoming a subscriber, you will receive the NODPA News six times per year and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA's work on behalf of organic dairy farm families depends on your contributions and donations. In addition to the bi-monthly NODPA News delivered by mail, supporters can access the Odairy Listserv; subscribe to the bimonthly NODPA E-newsletter; visit our very active web page (www.nodpa.com) and benefit from farmer representation and advocacy with Congress, USDA NOP, processors, consumers and the media; plus attend the annual NODPA Field Days.

This all cost money and we need your support!

Note that if you sign up for the Voluntary Organic Milk Check-Off, you will be automatically signed up as a NODPA News subscriber.

_____ $50 NODPA News annual subscription _____ $100 to $500 NODPA Supporter _____ $500 to $1,000 Friend of NODPA
_____$1000-$5,000 Patron of NODPA Choose your own amount $_____ (add amount)

All donations support NODPA's work representing organic dairy farmers at the USDA, in Congress, with processors, consumers, and with the media as an independent and trusted voice.

Name: _____ Farm Name _____Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES / NO Number of milking cows: _____Milk buyer: _____
Are you transitioning to organic? YES / NO If yes, anticipated certification date:_____ Certifier:_____

Please mail this form with a check to: NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, or by fax: 866-554-9483 or by email to emaltby@comcast.net. Please make your check payable to: NODPA
Credit card: Master Card Visa Discover Venmo Card #: _____

Name on Card: _____ Expiration Date: _____ __ Security Code on Card: _____

Address for card: _____

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

continued from page 19

Donations

Additional donations allow NODPA to expand its advocacy and services. While the form on page 19 outlines suggested giving levels, every contribution matters and is equally appreciated. Your generosity helps sustain our work and the people behind it.

Milk Check Assignments

Keep Your Federal Checkoff Dollars

Since February 29, 2016, certified organic farmers have been eligible for exemption from federal conventional commodity checkoff programs. If you haven't already applied, the process is simple. See the form on page 21 or download it at www.ams.usda.gov/resources/rp-organic-exemption.

Assign a Portion of Your Milk Check to NODPA

Support NODPA's future by assigning a percentage of your milk check directly to the organization. Simply complete the form below, select your contribution amount, and return it to NODPA. We'll forward it to your milk handler. This simple, ongoing contribution provides reliable support with no additional effort after enrollment. Join Kirk and Kathie Arnold and fellow producers in protecting organic dairy integrity and advocating for fair milk prices.

Where Your Support Goes

The 2026 income and expense figures below illustrate the cost of sustaining NODPA's current programs, services, and advocacy efforts.

NODPA 2026 income and expense 11.1 2026*	
Income	
Field Days	$ 22,000.00
Farm Aid and other grants	$ 8,500.00
Advertising	$ 22,000.00
Subscriptions, assignments, donations	$ 13,000.00
Total Income	**$ 65,500.00**
Expenses	
Dues and Subscriptions	$ 8,600.00
Field Days	$ 8,500.00
NODPA News direct expense**	$ 43,400.00
Executive Director (not paid currently)	$ 20,000.00
Odairy	$ 2,140.00
Travel (no travel in 2026)	$ 5,000.00
Legal and insurance	$ 2,500.00
Other expense	$ 2,000.00
Total expense	**$ 92,140.00**
* Estimated based on previous years	
** $6,000 in editorial coordination payment is included in this annual expense	
***$1,000 event coordination payment is included in this annual expense	

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, _____ (please print name as shown on your milk check)

request that _____(name of company that sends your milk check)

Deduct the sum of:

_____ $0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

_____ $0.05 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but can now be returned to you as an organic producer if you have applied for the exemption.) If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here ____or https://www.ams.usda.gov/resources/rp-organic-exemption

_____ $0.07 per hundredweight (the $.05 marketing check-off plus $0.02)

as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of _____202___. The total sum will be paid monthly to NODPA. This agreement may be ended at any time by the producer by sending a written request to their milk buyer with a copy to NODPA.

Producer signature: _____ **Date:** _____**Producer number/ member no:** _____

Milk handlers: please send payments to: Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Farm Information:

Number of milking cows_____Tel #:_____ Email:_____

Certifying Agency: _____

Farm Address: (please print) _____

***Producers**—please send the whole form to NODPA, Attn Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, so we can track who has signed up and forward this form to the milk handler. Thank you.*

Organic Exemption Request Form

National Dairy Promotion and Research Board

OMB No. 0581-0093

The information on this form is required to make a determination concerning a person's eligibility for exemption from assessments under research and promotion programs.

Type of Operation: See supplemental list.

Please complete the following:

Applicant's First and Last Name:

Company or Farm name:		Phone:	
Street address:		Fax:	
City/State/Zip code:		E-mail:	
Tax ID # SSN or EIN:		Importer ID #	

In order to be exempt, the above-named company must meet all of the following (please check):

☐ Operates under an approved organic system plan authorized under the USDA-AMS organic regulations (7 CFR Part 205) and maintains a valid organic certificate issued by an AMS accredited certifying agent.

☐ Produces/Imports products eligible to be labeled "organic" or "100% organic" under the USDA organic regulations.

☐ Is subject to assessments under the research and promotion program for which this exemption is requested.

☐ A copy of this company's organic farm or organic handling operation certificate and addendum provided by a USDA-accredited certifying agent under the OFPA must be attached. Importers should attach a copy of a certificate or equivalency agreement for the eligible product as established under NOP.

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that my annual production is an estimated total _____ pounds, with _____ pounds "organic" and/or "100% organic" and _____ pounds non-organic.

_____ Signature

_____ Title

_____ Date

Any false statement or misrepresentation may result in a fine of not more than $10,000, or imprisonment for not more than 5 years or both (18 U.S.C. 1001).

Please return this form to:

National Dairy Promotion and Research Board
Attn: Collections and Compliance
6133 North River Road, Suite 200
Rosemont, IL 60018
Fax Number: (847) 803-1044
Email: collections@dairy.org

AMS-15 (Rev. 12/15) Destroy previous editions.

See reverse for burden/non-discrimination statement

FEATURED FARM

DAISY HILL FARM

WINDHAM, ME

continued from page 1



At 18, Zack was milking his four cows in a tie-stall barn

another neighbor with milkings, and by the time he was 18, Zack had started his own farm, milking 4 cows in a tie-stall barn and selling raw milk, while going to school to become a mechanic. Daisy stayed with Zack for more than a decade, and eventually inspired the name of his farm, Daisy Hill Farm.

When Zack and Carli Moulton started Daisy Hill Farm in Windham, Maine in January 2026, they were beginning a new chapter in a dairy business they had spent years building together. High school sweethearts, they had been searching across the Northeast for a larger farm with room to expand their farm operation. Though neither was eager to leave family and friends, they looked at properties in Vermont and New York, and even made an offer on an organic dairy farm in New Hampshire, which was his initial connection with Stonyfield. When Zack told his friends that he planned to leave Maine to farm, they asked him to stay and lease their farm instead. The arrangement allowed the couple to stay in their hometown, and take over the Allen farm, a property with nearly a century of dairy history. The Allen family ran a conventional dairy operation, shipping milk to Oakhurst, and they milked cows there until early 2025.

The Moultons arrived with a few cows in milk, 30 heifers, and a small raw milk business. Working with MOFGA, they began transitioning the land and developing an organic systems plan. By June 2026, the farm was certified organic, allowing them to purchase an established organic herd of 39 cows and begin shipping milk to Stonyfield. Meanwhile, their original 35 heifers and cows are continuing the transition process. Those in milk are milked separately into a second bulk tank, and their milk is sold raw at several local stores and on-farm. For Zack and Carli, the move marked a significant step toward building a future in organic dairy farming.

The decision to transition to organic production was driven in part by the realities of today's dairy market. Conventional milk pickup options have become difficult to secure, companies are not adding new farms, and prices are low, making it hard to see an optimistic future in the conventional market. The opportunity to contract with Stonyfield offered a path forward. In a state where dairy farmers have faced shrinking market options and the loss of buyers, organic has become the best option for family-scale dairy farms to continue operating. This became more than an opportunity to grow their business. It offered a way to make full-time dairy farming a viable long-term livelihood.

Throughout the transition process, Zack has relied on support from MOFGA and his mentor, Andy Smith, through the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). Andy runs the Milkhouse in Monmouth, ME, and has been an important resource as they work through the practical details of managing a herd organically. Carli shared that the most important thing they've learned from Andy was the importance of pasture management and grazing, as well as how to rotationally graze and set up paddocks. When their herd was smaller and they didn't need to meet a pasture requirement, Zack would put the cows out in a permanent pasture and just drop in a bale for them to eat if the grass ran out. Now, with a larger herd and the requirement to meet 30% of dry matter intake from pasture, there was the challenge of sizing paddocks appropriately, deciding how often to move the cows, and actually tracking and recording dry matter intake - which Carli shared was "the most challenging part of the organic certification paperwork."

For Zack and Carli, making the transition to organic production while also expanding their herd, having a mentor to turn to for that practical guidance has been especially valuable. The requirements of organic dairy farming go far beyond completing certification paperwork. They also shape daily decisions about pasture management, feed, and herd care. Working with Andy has helped them think intentionally about how to manage their land with a much larger herd, and how to measure the results. As they gain experience with grazing and tracking dry matter intake, they

FEATURED FARM

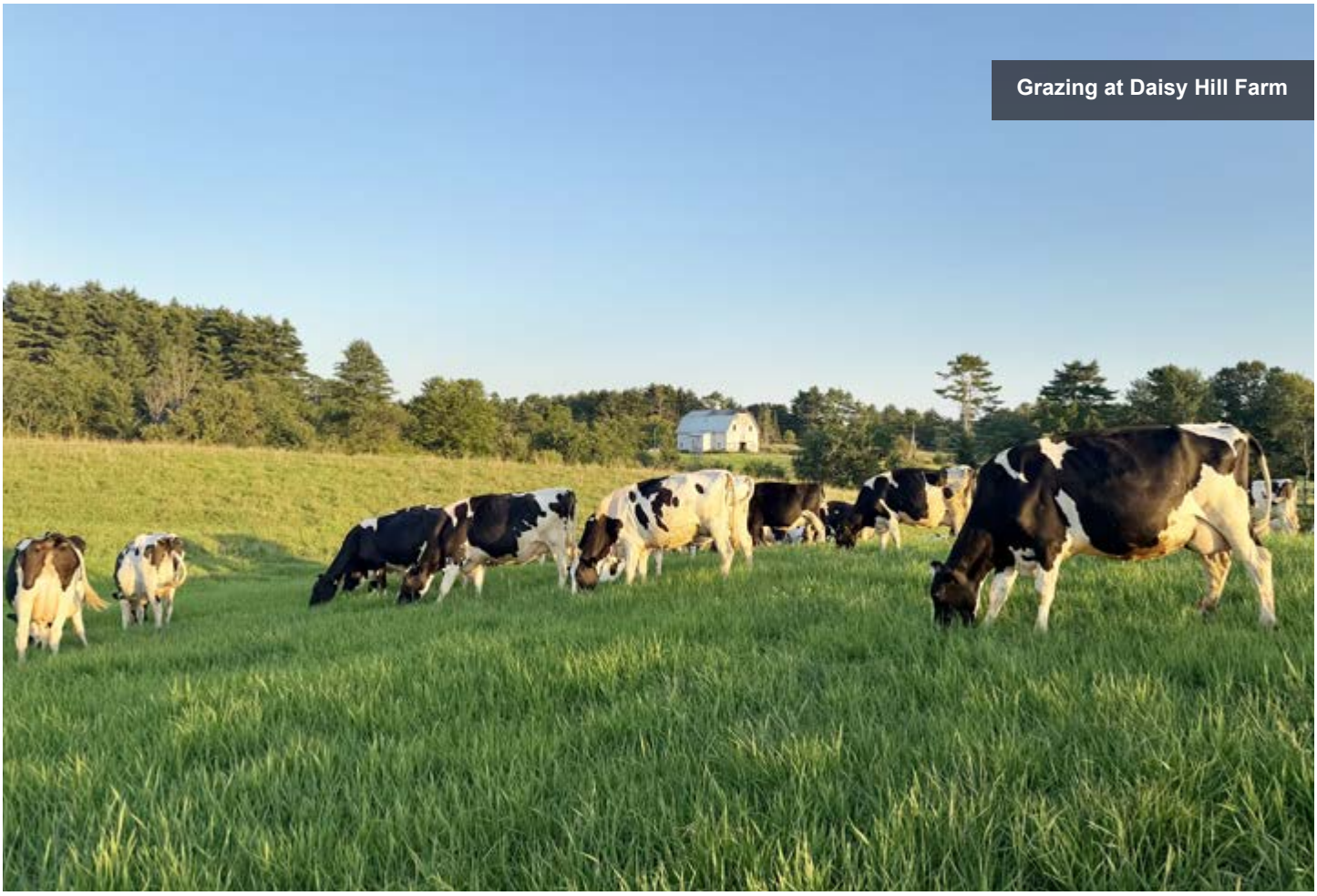
are developing a better understanding of how their management decisions affect both the cows and the farm's overall viability.

The move to Daisy Hill has given them more room to grow, but it has also brought new responsibilities. Adjusting overnight to a new workload when they bought in the organic herd in June was another major challenge. In the span of a day, they went from milking four cows to forty, while also taking on the additional work of caring for a much larger herd, troubleshooting problems, and keeping records. Zack and Carli now balance the daily demands of milking and managing a larger herd with the work of developing nutrition programs, raising replacements, and learning the ins and outs of organic production. They do not have employees, although Carli's mother and the farm's landowner help with milking and calf care when needed. When asked about what their division of labor looks like, Carli laughed and explained, "We don't really have a division of labor, although maybe we should think about that! We both do what needs to be done. Zack is on the farm full-time. He milks, runs the equipment and does the cropping. He is a mechanic, so he takes care of fixing things that break. I work as a nurse three days a week. On those days, I help with one milking or the other, depending on the schedule. I take care of the paperwork and emails. I know how to run most of the equipment and can help out with cropping. Oh, and the chickens are mine!"

Daisy Hill Farm includes the home farm, which consists of 80 acres total; 30 is permanent pasture and the remaining 50 is a mix of hay ground and forest. In total, Zack harvests around 350 acres of hay and alfalfa from leased ground, providing an important source of forage for their herd. Managing that land themselves affords them a reliable supply of feed, as well as control over feed quality, as they work towards a consistent feeding program for their cows. They buy their grain from Morrison's Custom Feeds in Vermont.

The farm's existing infrastructure has allowed Zack and Carli to expand without having to make major investments in facility upgrades at the outset. The cows are housed in a freestall barn, with separate facilities for young stock, including a dry yard for heifers and individual calf pens. They milk in a double eight walk-in parlor, with two bulk tanks to accommodate both their organic and transitioning herds. It takes about an hour and a half to do the milking.

They currently own 80 cows and are milking approximately 50 of them. The herd includes mostly Holsteins, with a small number of



Grazing at Daisy Hill Farm

FEATURED FARM

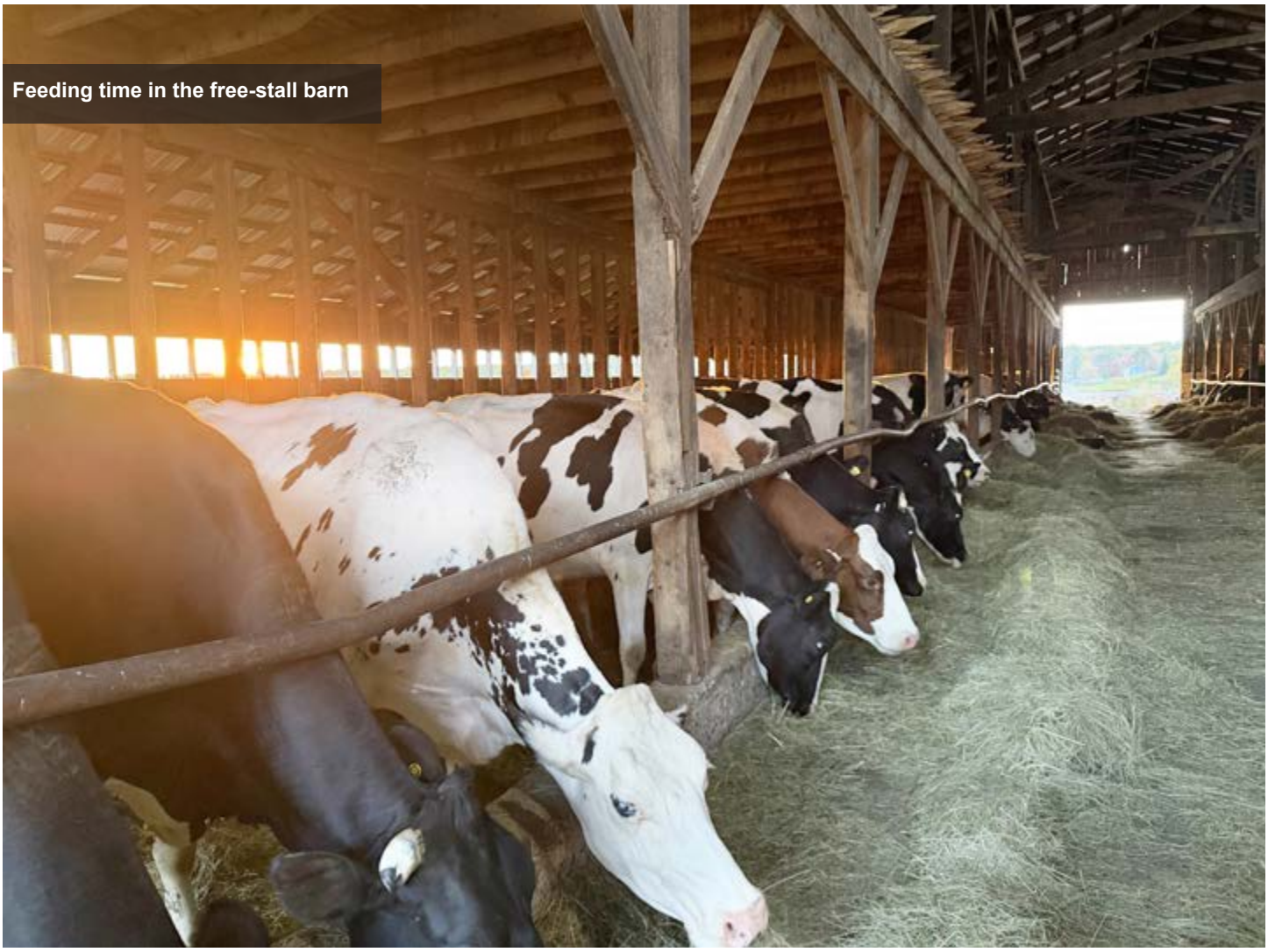
Jerseys and Shorthorns mixed in. They average 54 pounds of milk per cow, with a SCC of 140,000, 3.7% butterfat, and 3% protein across the herd.

Rotational grazing is an important part of the farm's management. They have a double-strand wired perimeter fence, with interior divisions of single strand polywire for setting paddocks. During the pasture season, the herd is generally moved to fresh grass every three nights, although during this year's drought conditions, they have shortened that to a two-night interval.

The cows spend most of their time grazing at night, with the feeding routine shifting with the seasons. Now that temperatures are cooling and pastures slow, they are adjusting the balance between grazing and stored feed. Younger heifers are trained to electric fencing in a double-wired pasture specifically for that purpose before being allowed to rotationally graze.

Forage quality and ration balance are ongoing considerations. A nutritionist working with the farm through Morrison's Feed has tested their feeds and made recommendations for supplements and ration adjustments. After visiting the farm, they recommended red clover as a way to increase pasture protein. As Zack and Carli gain experience managing the herd organically, they are also learning to better understand dry matter intake and how to know how much of the cows' nutritional needs are met through grazing. In their first year recording it for organic production, they achieved 40% DMI from pasture over the course of the grazing season. Zack would like to continue improving the pastures and be able to increase the amount of feed the cows harvest for themselves through grazing.

Their current feeding routine includes silage, dry hay, and grain, with amounts adjusted based on pasture availability and the needs of the herd. In early fall, when we spoke, Carli said they were feeding one silage bale and one dry bale during the day, along with about 12 pounds of grain at milking. For winter, they plan to rely on baleage and grass silage, with additional forage purchases likely needed to meet the herd's demand. They also plan to feed a



Feeding time in the free-stall barn

FEATURED FARM

TMR this winter. Calves receive milk, with grain, hay, and water available as they grow, and are weaned off milk between six and eight weeks of age.

With the herd still growing, Zack is focused on raising his own replacements and building a herd that will support the farm's long-term goals. The couple plans to retain replacement heifers rather than sell them, allowing them to expand the milking herd over time, with a goal of milking around 70 head. The organic herd they purchased had been largely bred to Angus, so most of the calves born at Daisy Hill this year have been sold, as they move towards producing replacements for the dairy. There are currently five replacement calves being raised, with hopes for many more in 2027.

Building a larger milking herd will take time. The couple uses artificial insemination for breeding and plans to use sexed semen to increase the number of heifer calves born. They have used a bull with their heifers in the past, and Carli plans to take a class to learn to AI the herd herself. They are not yet following a highly specific genetic selection program, instead prioritizing milk production and high percentage of heifer offspring. Zack and Carli are also interested in developing a registered Holstein herd over time. Their original cows are registered, and building a consistent herd is one of their long-term goals.





Cows resting in the pasture on a beautiful summer day

FEATURED FARM



On-farm sales grow

Maintaining herd health is another area they continue to build. Their preventative program includes vaccinations, a mineral mix, and supplements like kelp and diatomaceous earth. They also work with a veterinarian familiar with organic dairy production, and turn to him when questions arise. They have encountered a few common health challenges, including milk fever and some somatic cell spikes. They've begun monthly DHIA testing, and were able to narrow down the problem cows and keep their milk out of the tank, getting SCC numbers under control. Now that they are seeing more consistency with numbers, they plan to cut back on the frequency of testing. In addition to veterinary guidance, their TOPP mentor, Andy, remains an important resource as they learn more about organic herd management and the practical application of organic standards. Luckily, they have not had many challenges with calf health. They do plan to begin a calf-hood vaccination plan as the number of calves kept on the farm increases.

Carli has noticed positive changes in the cows' body condition since placing greater emphasis on pasture. Although the animals had access to pasture before, managing grazing as a central part of their feeding program has changed how they approach the herd's daily routine. They feel the cows have benefitted from rotational grazing, and are always eager to head out to new pastures. They run, kick up their heels, and really enjoy getting that fresh grass. Carli shared that "The most rewarding part (of dairy farming) is going out at night and seeing how happy the cows are now. Petting them, getting love from them. They were skittish when we first got them, but now they are affectionate and curious."

While shipping milk to Stonyfield represents a major market for the farm, Zack and Carli plan to continue direct marketing raw milk as part of their business model. In addition to the dairy, they run a roadside stand where they sell beef, eggs, and vegetables produced on the farm, as well as their raw milk. Carli shared their vision of expanding the stand into a farm store that will have set hours that it's open. They would like to expand the farm's product line to include products produced mostly on their own farm, including more beef and meat chickens. Once the store is established, they would also like to support other local farms in order to expand product offerings. Their goal is to become a place where local people can come to buy food produced right in their community. Carli said, "We need more local businesses like that, servicing the people who live here." Zack added, "One of our goals is growing stronger relationships with our community."

Diversifying the farm's revenue streams is another important piece of building a viable business for the long term. Alongside the milk contract, direct sales give them opportunities to reach local customers and earn income from a wider range of products, providing some protection from fluctuations in the dairy market. They hope the farm store will help bring those pieces together, allowing them to run a diverse business that serves both their family and their community.

This focus on their community lays a strong foundation for Daisy Hill Farm. The combination of a milk contract, an expanding herd, direct sales, and support from their community and other farmers gives them multiple avenues to build on. Their experience illustrates the importance of finding a workable market and supportive network when making the transition to organic dairy

FEATURED FARM

farming. When talking about farming in their hometown, Carli shared, "Being able to do it here has been amazing. Having the support of our friends and family throughout this journey has been an incredible opportunity." They are working to ensure Daisy Hill Farm has a bright future, and they believe organic is the path towards that end. Zack shared his feelings on it clearly when he said, "Organic is important because it leaves the soil in a healthier place for the next generation. It has brought life back into this farm." ◆



Zack and Carli Moulton in their milking parlor at Daisy Hill Farm

Carli and Zack Moulton, Daisy Hill Farm, Windham, Maine, can be reached by email at daisyhillfarm26@gmail.com or on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sunsetfarmdairy/

TEMPORARY VARIANCE GUIDANCE AND FORM

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Explain Your Management Decisions

Your request should also describe the actions you took to minimize the impact while continuing to comply with the organic regulations whenever possible.

Examples include:

a) Alternative management practices implemented
b) Adjustments made to protect crops, livestock, or organic products
c) Changes made to reduce losses
d) Efforts to maintain compliance despite challenging conditions
e) Demonstrating that reasonable management decisions were made helps provide a complete picture of the situation.

CONTINUE MAINTAINING RECORDS

Even if you anticipate requesting a temporary variance, continue maintaining complete records throughout the event/issue. Good documentation supports both your variance request and your ongoing compliance with the USDA organic regulations.

Important Reminders:

The USDA NOP considers temporary variances individually, based on the specific facts provided for each operation; however, a certifier may submit a "Blanket Request" from one or multiple certifiers on behalf of many operations. If there is a common regional need, inquiring about a blanket temporary variance for specific counties (or a whole state) may be the most efficient and equitable option.

Approval is not automatic.

- A temporary variance must be approved by the National Organic Program through your certifier.
- Continue following all applicable organic requirements until the NOP grants a temporary variance.
- Contact your certifier promptly whenever circumstances arise that may affect your compliance with the organic regulations. Not all certifiers are familiar with temporary variance procedures, so you may need to advocate for yourself if you feel a temporary variance is needed.
- Timely communication and complete documentation give your certifier and the NOP the information needed to evaluate your request as efficiently as possible.

Disclaimer: This guidance document is designed to help producers and certifiers better understand the Temporary Variance process. Operations are not required to complete the template form to apply for a temporary variance. Likewise, certifiers may require an operation to complete their temporary variance documentation or submit additional information beyond what is outlined here. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay and Feed Prices November 2026

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Total estimated sales of organic packaged fluid milk for July 2026 show a decrease of 3.00% over July 2025 sales, as conventional fluid milk sales in the same month show an increase of 0.02% over July 2025. August 2026 is better, with organic estimated sales at 2.4% higher than August 2025, and a 0.1% increase in conventional sales over August 2025.The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Market Information Branch published estimated national organic fluid milk product sales for July and August 2026, compiled with data from the Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMO). Total US sales of packaged organic fluid milk products were estimated at 235 million pounds in July 2026, with organic Whole Milk sales up by 3.5% over July 2025 at 136 million pounds, and sales of organic Fat Reduced Milk down by 10.7%

over July 2025 at 98 million pounds. In August 2026, total sales of organic packaged milk were 242 million pounds, with sales of organic packaged Whole Milk at 141 million pounds, an increase of 9.1% over 2025. Sales of organic Fat Reduced Milk were 100 million pounds, a 5.7% decrease over 2025. Year over year, there is a 0.3% decrease in sales between year-to-date August 2026 and year-to-date August 2025.

The average national retail price for organic milk, as recorded by the FMMO in September 2026, decreased to $5.15 per half gallon for Whole Milk and $5.16 for Organic Reduced Fat 2% milk compared to $5.46 in September 2025 and a decrease of $0.72 over September 2024. The average national retail price for October 2026 was $5.14 per half gallon for Whole Milk and Organic Reduced Fat milk, compared to $5.35 in October 2025, a decrease of $0.21 year-over-year. Year-to-date, January to October 2026, average retail price for organic half gallon is $5.23, compared to $5.07 in the same period in 2025. These are average retail prices. In a western Massachusetts supermarket, Organic Valley Grass Fed milk packaged in Indiana was $7.84/half gallon and still competitive with other Organic Grass Fed milks in a packed retail dairy showcase. There was the usual range in prices for different locations in Oct, with a low of $4.14 in Kansas and a high of $6.68 in Pittsburgh, PA. In Syracuse, NY it was $4.42; in New York City, NY it was $4.99; $4.92 in Boston, MA; and $5.51 in Hartford, CT. Of the 30 cities reporting data, an increase of 3 to 16, had retail prices under $5 and 5 had retail prices over $6, with 9 in the $5 per half gallon range.

Estimated Fluid Milk Products Sales Reports

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	July 2026	2026 Year to date	July 2025	Year to date -2025
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	136	999	3.5%	4.2%
Flavored Whole milk	1	6	16.1%	25.4%
Organic Reduced-Fat Milk (2%)	71	538	--9.6%	-4.3%
Organic Low-Fat Milk (1%)	13	102	--25.9%	-13.7%
Organic Fat-Free Milk Skim	10	65	-3.0%	-8.7%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	4	29	-15.7%	-14.5%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	0	-99.1%	-93.5%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	98	734	-10.7%	-6.5%
Total Organic Milk Products	**235**	**1,740**	**-3.0%**	**-0.6%**

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	August 2026	2026 Year to date	August 2025	Year to date -2025
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	141	1140	9.1%	4.8%
Flavored Whole milk	1	7	33.5%	26.5%
Organic Reduced-Fat Milk (2%)	75	612	-0.6%	-3.8%
Organic Low-Fat Milk (1%)	14	116	-18.1%	-14.2%
Organic Fat-Free Milk Skim	9	75	4.4%	-7.2%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	2	31	-55.4%	-19.9%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	0	-100.0%	-94.1%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	100	835	-5.7%	-6.4%
Total Organic Milk Products	**242**	**1,981**	**2.4%**	**-0.3%**

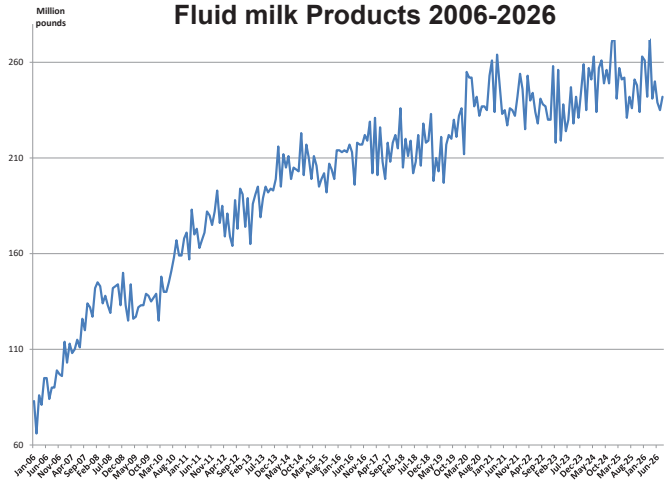
Data may not add due to rounding to the nearest million pounds

Organic milk and cream are still short in the Northeast and nationally, with spot prices reported to be increasing again in the $55/cwt range for fluid organic milk. Buyers are paying premiums up to $2/cwt to assist transition nationally, which is becoming attractive for conventional herds that have the land to transition to pasture. **With the dynamic competition for organic milk, producers need to assure themselves that the company they are signing with has the capacity for a prolonged time to ensure milk pick-up, stable pricing and a fair contract.** There are consistent rumors that a west coast brand will be putting together a pool of milk in the Northeast in 2027. The demand for conventional milk is testing the limits of processing facilities across the

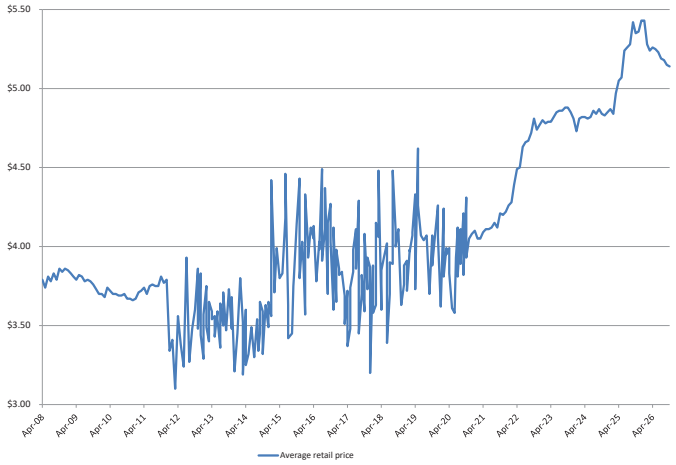
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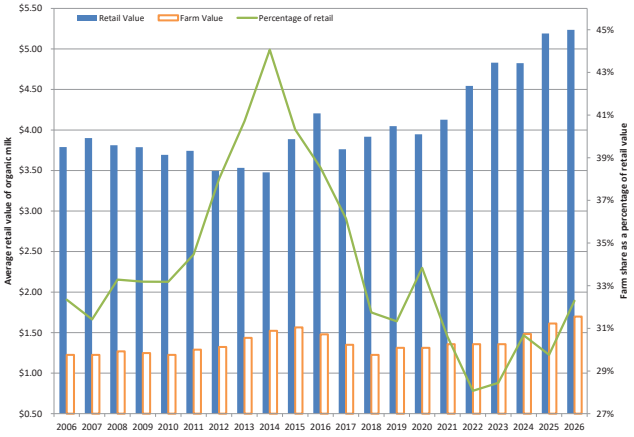
Estimated Total U.S. Sales of Organic Fluid milk Products 2006-2026



Average Organic Retail price for 1/2 gallons as reported by USDA AMS 2008-2026



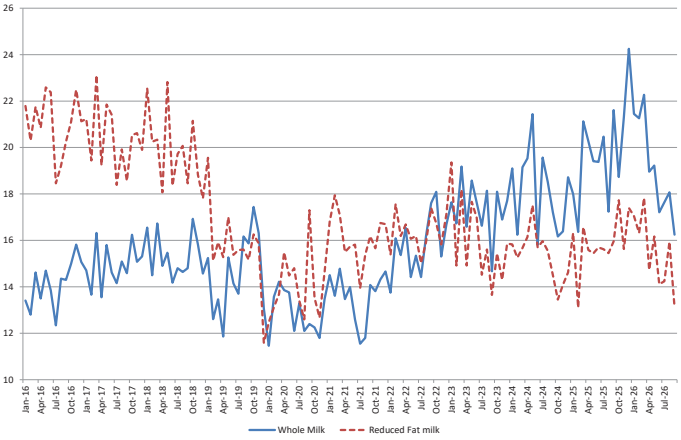
Average retail price, average farm share and percentage for half gallon of organic milk



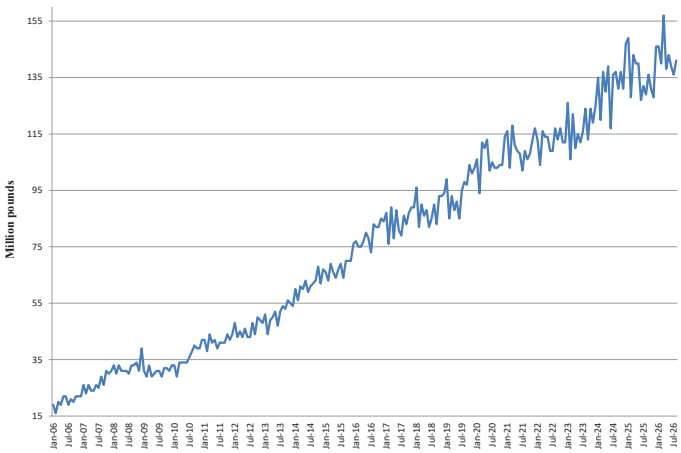
Utilization of Organic Fluid milk in FMMO 1 2016-2026

(not including fluid packaged milk processed out of order)

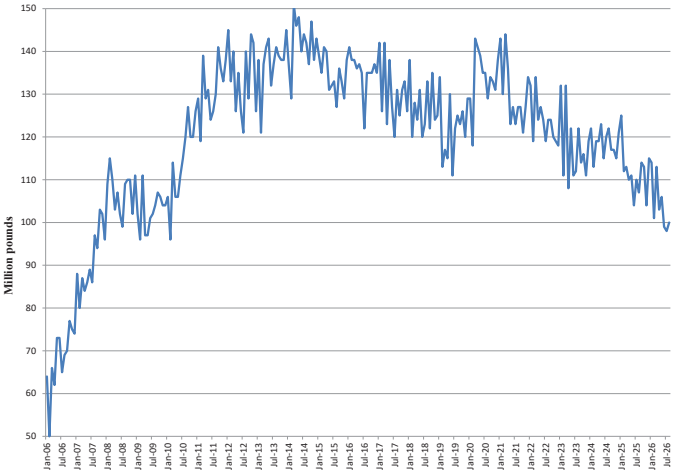
Million Pounds



Organic Whole Milk Retail Sales 2006-2026



Organic Reduced-Fat retail sales 2006-2026



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay and Feed Prices

continued from page 28

country. In the West, there is more processing coming back on-line both for conventional and for organic product. In the Midwest, there is expansion at several plants catering to organic which, hopefully, will take up any increase in production this fall as demand for processing is high and currently unmet.

Pay Price is staying steady and ranges from an annualized average of $35/cwt to $45/cwt for grain and pasture fed organic dairies, with Grass Fed organic certified dairies the Pay Price is ranging from $42/cwt up to $50+/cwt. Grass Fed, A2A2, regenerative, organic certification herds are in the $50 to $60 range. Producers report that Organic Valley will be going up $1/cwt in 2027, still the lowest national and regional brand for Pay Price, and they have reintroduced the Spring deduct.

UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS (Class 1) (Million pounds) in FMMO 1 (Northeast) not including packaged product out of order

Month	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2026	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2025	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2024	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2023	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2022	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2021	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2020
Jan	38.50	34.31	34.93	37.00	29.14	31.32	23.93
Feb	37.57	29.46	31.50	31.65	33.65	31.56	26.69
March	40.10	37.70	34.82	37.37	31.56	31.87	27.90
April	33.69	35.86	35.68	31.51	33.23	28.97	29.35
May	35.39	34.85	38.95	36.24	30.49	29.72	28.25
June	31.32	35.08	31.51	34.59	31.53	28.41	26.90
July	31.88	36.09	35.54	31.15	29.44	25.50	26.70
Aug	34.01	32.69	34.07	33.75	32.12	27.18	24.70
Sept	29.37	37.57	31.72	28.32	35.00	30.26	29.70
Oct		36.46	29.62	33.54	34.83	29.47	25.78
Nov		36.94	30.48	31.19	31.13	31.07	24.47
Dec		41.65	33.34	33.56	33.78	31.36	28.13
Annual		428.66	402.16	399.87	385.90	356.68	322.50

UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS AND CREAM BY POOL PLANT (Million pounds) in FMMO 32 (Central)

Month	2026	2026 sold out of order 32	2025	2025 out of Order	2024	2024 out of order	2023	2023 out of order
January	52.72	46.81	55.36	48.77	56.23	49.82	55.21	48.70
February	49.91	44.97	47.93	42.49	51.88	46.12	49.11	43.63
March	48.25	43.13	50.05	43.78	53.96	46.29	52.73	45.44
April	48.57	46.61	47.65	42.20	54.13	48.09	49.18	43.53
May	46.57	41.21	48.28	42.58	51.32	45.51	48.21	42.78
June	50.73	44.68	44.98	39.66	52.56	47.04	45.20	39.63
July	49.58	44.43	50.18	43.93	52.68	47.04	48.45	42.75
August	51.32	45.14	46.74	41.32	55.63	49.37	48.47	42.85
September	50.69	44.54	49.37	43.62	50.68	45.27	48.76	43.18
October			51.94	46.26	50.36	44.47	49.73	42.48
November			46.75	41.76	48.04	42.04	49.60	44.12
December			53.76	47.58	53.98	47.21	54.17	48.10
Total			592.99	523.94	631.45	558.25	598.82	527.18

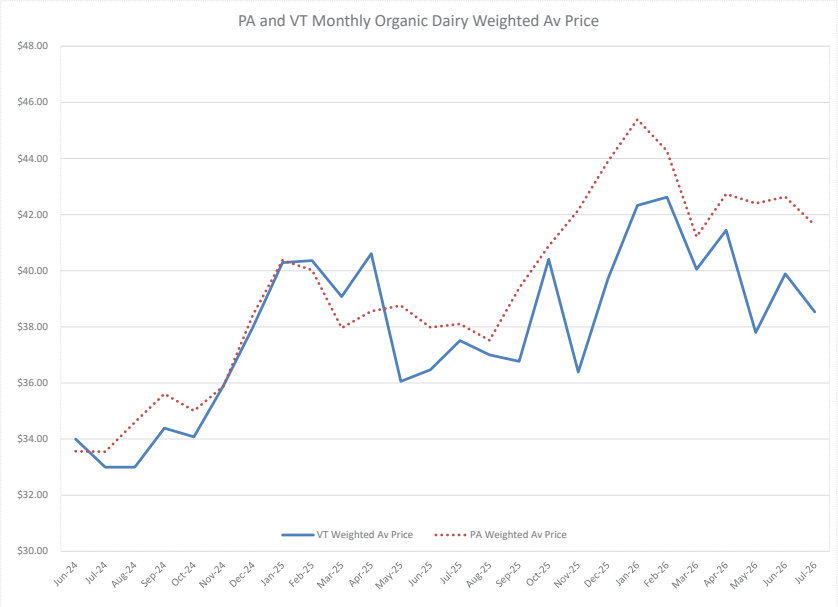
Federal Milk Marketing Order 1 (Order) reported that in August 2026, fluid Organic Milk packaged and utilized within the Order totaled 34.01 million pounds; higher than the August 2025 total of 32.69 million pounds. In August 2026, sales of Organic Whole Milk packaged in the Order were 18.07 million pounds, 0.83 million pounds higher than August 2025. In August 2026, sales of Organic Reduced Fat Milk packaged and utilized in the Order were 15.94 million pounds, 0.49 million pounds higher than August 2025. Total Class 1 milk (both conventional and organic) packaged outside the Order but sold within the Order, increased by 5.84 million pounds in August 2026 over August 2025 to 156.51 million pounds. Stonyfield/US Lactalis, UNC Dairy (Upstate Niagara) and other plants that process non-Class 1 products are not included in this data.

In September 2026, sales of fluid Organic Milk packaged and utilized within the Order totaled 29.37 million pounds; lower than the previous year of 37.57 million pounds, a decrease of 8.20 million pounds. In September 2026, sales of Organic Whole Milk packaged in the Order were 16.25 million pounds, 5.36 million pounds less than the 21.61 million pounds in September 2025. In September 2026, sales of Organic Reduced Fat Milk, packaged and utilized in the Order, were 13.12 million pounds, 2.84 million pounds lower than in September 2025. Packaged organic and conventional milk coming into the Order in September 2026 increased by 10.71 million pounds over the same period in 2025. Year to date, September 2026, there has been 89.33 million pounds more of packaged milk coming into the order than in the same period in 2025.

There are 3 other FMMO's that publish reports on the volume of Class 1 organic packaged milk in their Order, two of which report how much is 'exported' to other Orders. In August 2026, of the estimated 242 million pounds packaged and sold as Class 1 organic milk in the US, 51.32 million pounds were from Order 32 (Central), of which 45.14 million pounds were utilized in other

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

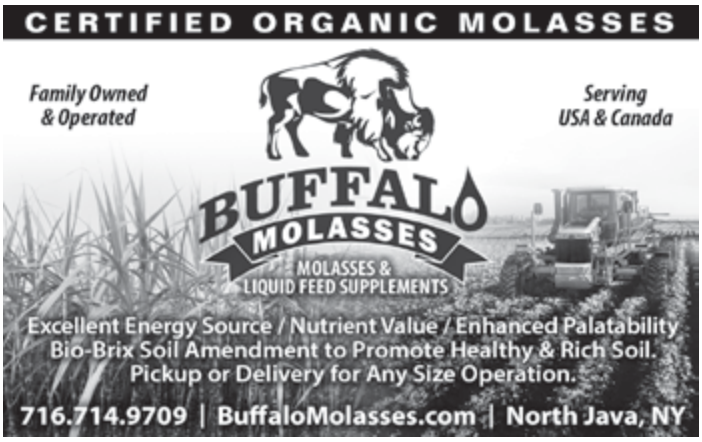
Orders. FMMO order 1 (Northeast) packaged 34.01 million pounds of organic milk in August 2026. FMMO 51 (California), packaged 37.84 million pounds, of which 757,124 pounds were sold in other Orders (just under 2% of the total packaged product). Order 33 (Mideast) packages less than Order 1, 32 and 51, with 25.37 million pounds in August 2026. Texas, in Southwest F.O. 126, and the Pacific Northwest F.O. 124 do not publish any breakdown of Class 1 organic milk or any other data on organic milk despite the new dairies coming into production. Of the 242 million pounds of organic packaged milk recorded nationally by FMMO and aggregated by the AMS Dairy Program Market Information Branch, approximately 93.46 million pounds are not accounted for (about 38%) in the individual FMMO's public reports. We have no independent record of how much organic milk is produced that is used in products other than Class 1.



The Vermont Report has published data since November 2023. The reported weighted average Pay Price for the first seven months in 2026 was $40.38/cwt, with a monthly range of $37.80/cwt to a maximum of $42.62/cwt (does not include any deductions for hauling). The average daily production per cow, for 2025, was 46.65 lbs./cow and for the first seven months of 2026 it was 52.94 lbs. The weighted average Pay Price for July 2026 was $38.53/cwt. with daily production of 53.88 lbs.

The Pennsylvania Report shows a weighted average Pay Price was $42.89/cwt for the first seven months of 2026, with a monthly range of $41.21/cwt to a maximum of $45.39/cwt (does not include any deductions for hauling). The average daily production per cow for 2025 was 31.35 pounds, and for the seven months of 2026 it was 31.67 pounds. The weighted average Pay Price for July 2026 was $41.62/cwt. with an average daily production of 34.68 lbs.

Roman Caraman reports for the USDA AMS Market News monthly on organic dairy production and Pay Price for both Vermont and Pennsylvania and bi-weekly publishes the Organic Dairy News.





ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Milk Exports

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) releases monthly export data which includes export volumes and values for organic milk categorized as HS-10 code 0401201000, milk and cream, not concentrated nor sweetened, of a fat content, by weight, exceeding 1% but not exceeding 6%, certified organic. The data from July 2026 shows that organic milk HS-10 exports were 2,978 cwt., a decrease of 14,610 cwt. over the same month in 2025. August 2026 data showed exports of 7,339 cwt., a decrease of 5,983 cwt. over August 2025, or a drop of 82%. Year-to-date August 2026 total exported milk was 57,287 cwt, a 27,662-cwt. decrease or a drop of 33% on the same period in 2025. None of this milk is subject to tariffs under the USMCA or more recent tariffs and any increase will still fall below the level where current agreements mandate tariffs being added.

Auction News

On October 6, 2026, approximately 100 head of organic cows were sold as part of a dairy herd disposal in Schenevus, NY. They were all certified organic, grass-fed and A2-A2. Average price per head was $5,400. The owner retained heifers for a possible future return to milking with a different buyer.

There were two large sales of organic cows and heifers at Premier Livestock and Auctions, Withee, WI (prices, below) in September and October. In October 2026, organic cull cows were trending steady with good quality cows at $145-$188/cwt and lower quality at $144/cwt and down. Calf prices are on the way down with beef crosses around the $1,000 mark and dairy calves at $800 and down.

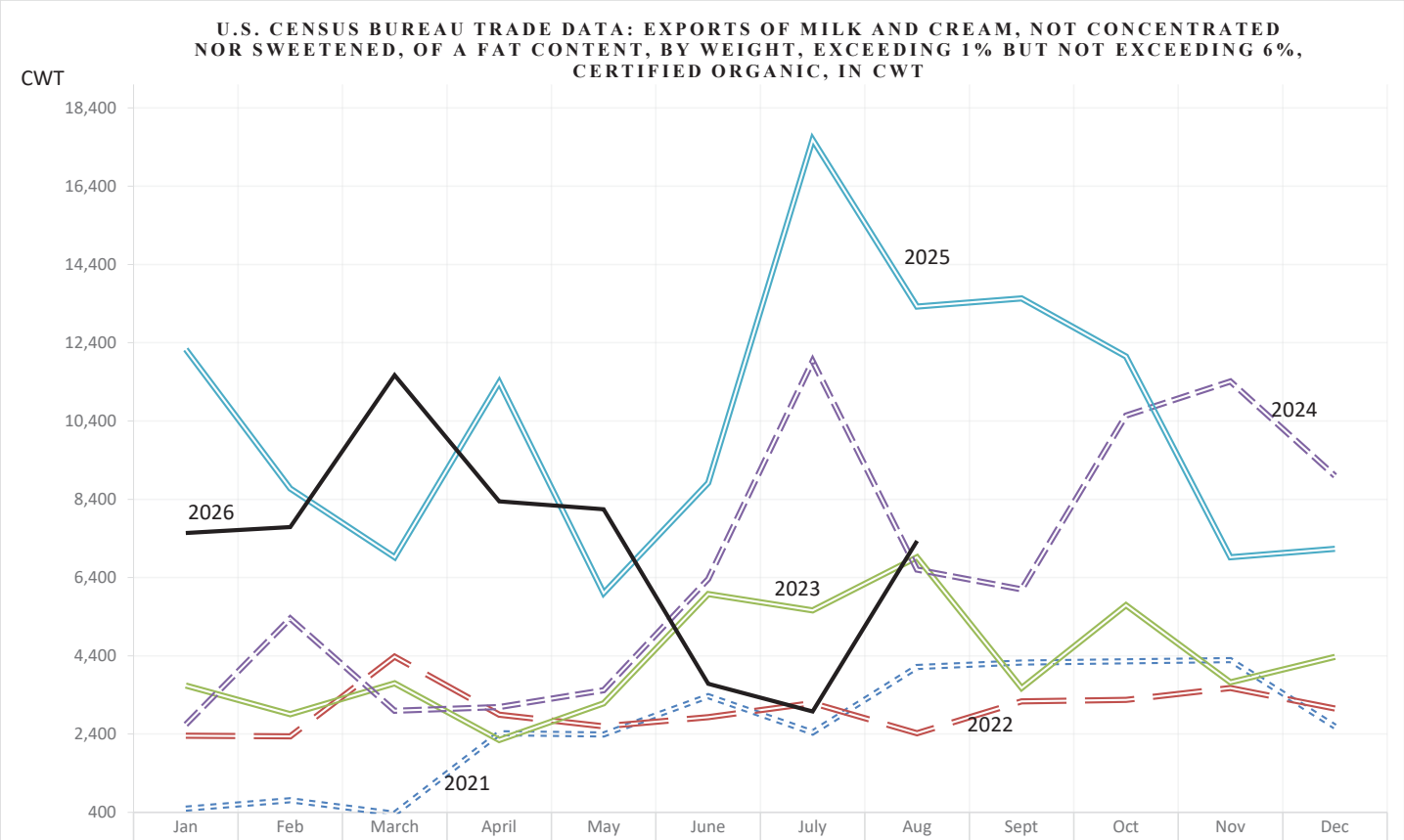
• 9-2-2026

212 Head of cattle sold. Organic herd dispersal averaged $5,500/head.

Top Quality Holstein Dairy Cows - $5,750-7200; Good Quality Holstein Dairy Cows $2850-5725; Lower Quality Holstein Dairy Cows $2825and down; Top Quality Springing Heifers $5500-7000; Common Springing Heifers $5525 and down.

• 10-14-2026

Over 225 Organic dairy cows sold with 6 herd dispersals. Top Quality Dairy Cows – $5000-$7200; Good Quality Dairy Cows – $2500-4975; Lower Quality Dairy Cows – $2475 and down;



	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021	493	708	365	2,421	2,389	3,368	2,443	4,114	4,227	4,260	4,290	2,595
2022	2,358	2,342	4,379	2,896	2,601	2,832	3,192	2,424	3,236	3,275	3,577	3,051
2023	3,639	2,911	3,695	2,249	3,188	5,975	5,562	6,919	3,578	5,691	3,720	4,373
2024	2,643	5,352	2,998	3,093	3,518	6,360	11,930	6,604	6,096	10,538	11,407	8,997
2025	12,229	8,677	6,920	11,391	6,001	8,820	17,588	13,321	13,532	12,050	6,918	7,134
2026	7,537	7,687	11,571	8,345	8,146	3,684	2,978	7,339				

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Top Quality Springing Heifers – $5000-6500; Common Springing Heifers – $4975 and down; Short Bred Heifers – Up to $5000; Open Heifers – 300#-500# – $1500-2000; Open Heifers – 500#-700# – $1800-2600; Open Heifers – 700#-850# – $2000-3000.

Dairy Bulls: Breeding Bulls – Up to $3800

At Hoskins Livestock Auction, New Berlin, NY in September and October 2026, the average price range for organic cattle hasn't changed much from previous months: Organic cull cows - $110-140 per cwt. Milking-age organic cows varied from a high of $4,100 each to a low of $1,500 with organic bred heifers range from $2,000 to $3,500, and open heifers at $1,500.

APHIS Updates Guidance on Movement of Cattle

Effective April 2026, lactating dairy cattle moving interstate from states with **Unaffected State Status** under the National Milk Testing Strategy **are no longer required to be tested for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 prior to movement.** To maintain Unaffected State Status requires ongoing testing and surveillance activities to confirm the absence of HPAI in the state's dairy herds. On Oct 8th, USDA/APHIS announced the first detection of H5N1 in dairy cattle in Washington State, which was followed a week later by the first (reportedly mild) human H5N1 infection reported in the US in 2026. Since then, the number of infected dairy herds in Washington State has risen to 9 by October 24, 2026. USDA reports that Texas has detected four infected herds in October, and Kansas has reported one.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the first detection of New World screwworm (NWS) in wildlife in the United States, in an elk in Pecos County, TX. As hunting seasons continue, hunters are encouraged to stay alert for signs of NWS when observing, harvesting, or processing wildlife.

Watch for:

- Visible maggots (larvae) in wounds or body openings
- Open, draining, or enlarging wounds
- Foul-smelling injuries
- Animals that appear weak, lethargic, isolated, or in distress
- Signs of infestation around the nose, mouth, ears, eyes, or genital areas

The USDA is currently using a phased reopening schedule for southern border ports of entry to import cattle and livestock from Mexico, following a prior shutdown due to New World screwworm detections.

Organic Milk Buyers

Below we have a list of contacts for milk buyers who responded to our request to have their information made public or suggested contacts for those that didn't respond:

- **Byrne Dairy:**
  Mike Winkler, Director of Dairy Programs,
  cell phone (315)622-8779, mwinkler@byrne1933.com
  Greg Capozzi, Farm QC Inspector,
  cell phone (315) 632-2981, gcapozzi@Byrne1933.com .
- **CROPP Cooperative - Organic Valley brand:**
  Farmer Hotline at 888-809-9297 or
  farmerhotline@organicvalley.coop or
  Abbie Teeter Abigail.teeter@organicvalley.coop
  representative for western NY;
  Ethan Garrison ethan.garrison@organicvalley.coop
  rep for south central and eastern NY.
- **Family Farmstead Dairy, NY:**
  Thomas McGrath, tom@familyfarmsteaddairy.com,
  607-397-4044; www.familyfarmmsteaddairy.com ;
- **Horizon Organic LLC**:
  Amber Brown (Producer Relations Manager, Western NY)
  607-749-9185, amber.brown@horizon.com ;
  Michelle O'Brien (Producer Relations Manager, Eastern NY) 315-832-5293, michelle.obrien@horizon.com ;
  David Bigelow (Producer Relations Manager, Western PA & Eastern OH), 814-931-6948, david.bigelow@horizon.com
  Allen Klingler (Producer Relations Manager, Eastern PA)
  570-428-2089, allen.klingler@horizon.com
  Phil Forbes (Producer Relations Manager, MN, WI, MI, Western OH, IN, KY), 319-430-1942
- **Maple Hill:** Farm Service Number: 518.516.6090 ext. 1.
  Christina Reginelli (Director of Farm Services)
  518-275-3627, christina@maplehillcreamery.com
  Grace Knott (Field Manager, Northern NY, Central NY and Group Milkhouses) 518-231-0428,
  grace@maplehillcreamery.com ,
  Ashley Pierce (Field Manager, Central and West NY)
  518-610-5099, ashley.pierce@maplehillcreamery.com .
  Mark Martin (Field Manager, OH Farms) 419-895-1297,
  mark.martin@maplehillcreamery.com
  Roman Stoltzfoos (Field Manager PA) 717-278-1070,
  roman.stoltzfoos@maplehillcreamery.com .
- **Stonyfield/Lactalis USA:**
  Jeremy Russo: Manager, Farm Relationship and Procurement – NY/VT – jeremy.russo@us.lactalis.com (802)236-1920
  Erin Marlowe: Manager, Farm Relationship and Procurement – NH/VT – erin.marlowe@us.lactalis.com (603)496-9499
  Michael Brown: Manager, Farm Relationship and Procurement – Maine – michael.brown1@us.lactalis.com (207)944-8277
  Pam Riesgraf: Manager, Farm Relationship and Procurement – MidWest – pamela.riesgraf@us.lactalis.com (612) 670-9417
- **UNC (Upstate Niagara):**
  Mike Davis: General Manager, Membership Division and Bulk Sales; Office: (585) 815-6820 ext. 6441,
  Cell: (585) 409-1544 and mdavis@uncdairy.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Active and Reopened Ports for Cattle

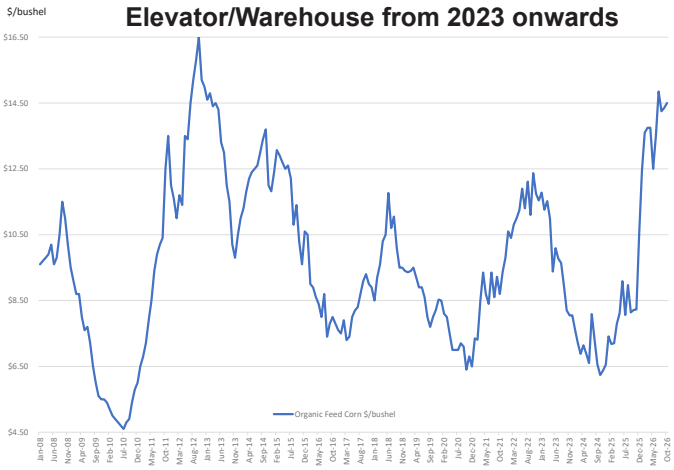
- **Douglas, Arizona:** Reopened for cattle on August 24, 2026.
- **Santa Teresa, New Mexico:** Reopened for livestock/cattle on September 24, 2026 (with equine imports scheduled to resume on October 26, 2026).
- **Columbus, New Mexico:** Scheduled to reopen for cattle imports on October 26, 2026.
- **Nogales, Arizona:** Scheduled to reopen for cattle imports on November 30, 2026 (contingent on safe trade conditions and infrastructure).

Organic Feed

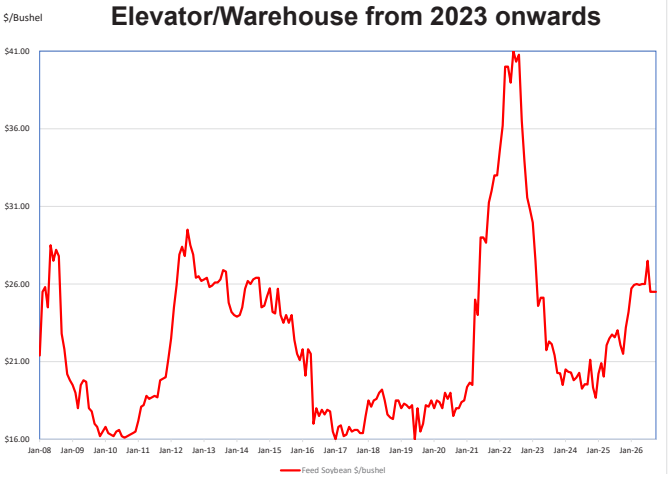
National data from USDA has organic feed corn delivered to the elevator (probably with an added surcharge when it is further trucked to the farm) with the price averaging $14.85 per bushel in July, and slightly less in October 2026, at $14.50. Organic feed soybean delivered to the elevator averaged $25.50/bu. in October. Soybean meal was trading at $950/ton in October 2026, with consistent demand. I have no accurate information on the price of hay, which depends on availability and expensive trucking. Anecdotally, the price has increased by $10-$20 per round bale. Buy regionally as soon as possible. Good growing weather in the Northeast has allowed producers to replenish hay inventory. When purchasing hay, always have it tested. We encourage everyone to ask for fiber digestibility when they get a forage test (NDFD30). Also if it is a fermented feed, they should ask for VFAs. Hay availability in the US is affected by prolonged drought in many areas, especially premium Alfalfa. ◆

(Feed pay charts can be viewed online at www.nodpa.com)

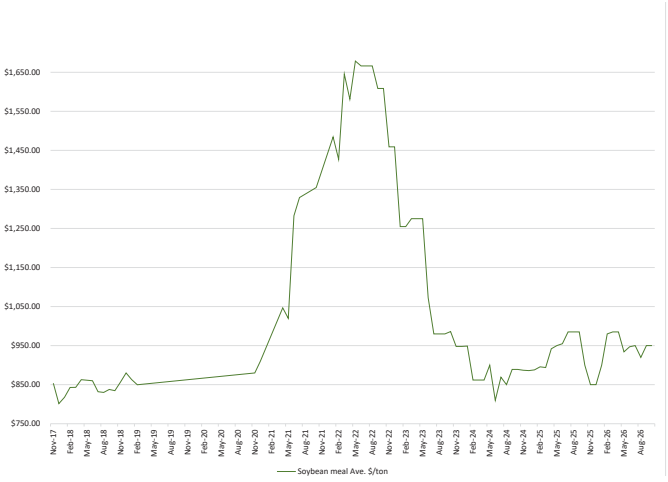
Organic Corn Price $/bushel 2008-2026 supplied by USDA AMS FOB the Farm and FOB Elevator/Warehouse from 2023 onwards



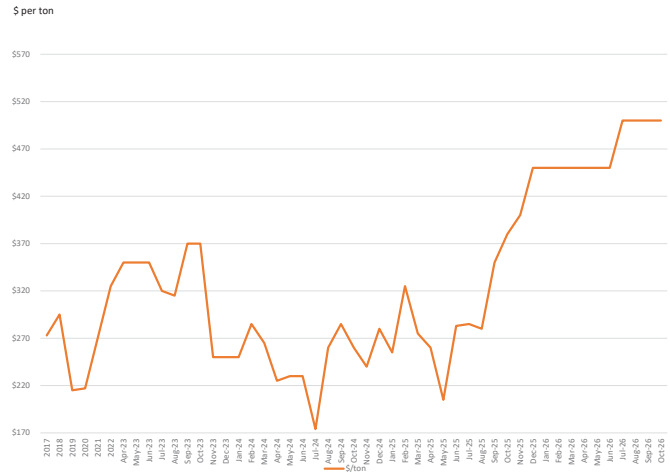
Organic Feed Soybean $/bushel 2008-2026 - USDA Market News Data - FOB Farm and FOB Elevator/Warehouse from 2023 onwards



2017-2026 - Soybean meal Ave. $/ton delivered FOB dealer/warehouse/elevator - USDA AMS Data



Organic Hay Dollars per ton (Average/year) - USDA AMS Data



Classified Ads

ANIMALS

FOR SALE: Red and White Purebred Holstein Bull, A2A2, proven breeder, sharp looking bull, Born 1/24/2024 Asking $4700. Contact Andrew, 518-775-3571, aquahommefarm@gmail.com

Location: Fort Plain, NY

COWS FOR SALE: Certified organic Jersey cows and heifers, Beef cross cows and heifers, let me know what you're looking for. We need to cut back on our numbers for the winter. We are 100% grass-fed, semi seasonal calving (March-November), and mostly A2/A2 cows. Contact Katia Holmes, mistybrookorganicfarm@yahoo.com, 207-616-6506.

Location: Albion, ME

COWS FOR SALE: 5 grass-fed, A2A2 OPT certified organic Jersey cows and one bull for sale. This farm has been 100% grass fed for the past 20 years. Call Milk N' Cream Jerseys at 814-349-5675, x4.

Location: Centre County, PA

BULL FOR SALE: Organic Blue and White Holstein Bull, Proven Breeder, Friendly, Born 11/21/2024, contact Andrew at aquahommefarm@gmail.com , 518-775-3571.

Location: Fort Plain, NY

HAY/FEED

FOR SALE: Certified Organic Straw Small Square Bales. Rye and Wheat available $6, delivery negotiable, discounts considered over 200. Please text 315-945-7184.

Location: Ithaca, NY

FOR SALE: Certified organic hay available. 40 4x4 round bales later first cutting, 90 4x4 round bales of second cutting. Mixed grass hay, net wrapped and stored inside. 70 3x3x6.5 big square bales of very nice second cutting orchard-grass and alfalfa mix hay. Trucking available, call or email for pricing, Nathaniel Stephens, n.stephens4020@gmail.com, 973-459-2691.

Location: Sussex, NJ

FOR SALE: NOFA-NY Organic BALEAGE - 1st cut grass mix - Processed - 4x4 Round Bales ~1000#. BEDDING HAY - Processed 4x5 Round bales ~ 1000# - net-wrapped. Also, 2025 BEDDING 4x4 1/2 Round bales - priced to sell. Call or text Jeff @ 607-566-8477 or email Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com.

Location: Avoca, NY

FOR SALE: CERTIFIED ORGANIC HAY for 2026: Small square bales 1st cutting mixed grass hay at $5 per bale. Small squares bales 2nd cutting mixed grass at $6 per bale. Small square bales bedding hay at $4 per bale. Large square bales 3' x 3' x 7' 1st cutting mixed grass hay at $70 per bale; quantity discounts. Round bales 4' x 5' twine wrapped 1st cutting mixed dry grass hay at $40.All hay is stored under cover or wrapped. Forage tests available. We ship throughout the east coast and have multiple delivery quantities or pickup at the farm. Samples available. Located in NY Southern Tier between Binghamton and Ithaca in Tioga County - 3624 Wilson Creek Rd, Berkshire NY. Call/text 315-378-5180.
Location: Berkshire NY

HAY FOR SALE: Great Quality 2026 Organic Second Cutting Small Square Bales, $7/bale. Certified by Pro-Cert. Contact Andrew at aquahommefarm@gmail.com, 518-775-3571.
Location: Fort Plain, NY

FOR SALE: Certified organic round bales, $50 / bale first cut, $65 second cut. Excellent quality, solid well packed 4 x 4 wrapped bales. Make sure that you have enough feed now before supplies get tight. Call or text 802-274-6402. Email ericatparis@gmail.com.
Location: Lyndonville, VT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MOFGA Certification Services, LLC (MCS) is hiring two full-time Organic Certification Specialists to join our team. MCS is a USDA-accredited organic certifier.

This position is remote, requiring travel within MCS' service territory, and off-site visits to client's farms and production facilities. The current service territory includes the state of Maine, New Hampshire, and northeastern Massachusetts. IOIA training (or equivalent) and prior organic inspection experience a plus. The Certification Specialist reports to the MCS Director and works collaboratively with MCS staff, specialists, and inspectors. This position requires some field work, including inspections, residue sampling, and investigations.

Visit our Employment Opportunities page, https://www.mofga.org/about-mofga/employment-opportunities/ to apply and for the full job description, benefits, and employment details. Priority will be given to candidates who apply before November 13, 2026.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: Threefold Community Farm, Monsey, NY, is seeking a full-time, year round Dairy Operations Lead to start mid-October, as well as a Vegetable Operations Lead to start in February 2027. Both positions will be fully mentored and have the opportunity to grow into more independent leadership roles as skills and competencies are acquired. For more information and to apply, go to this link: https://threefoldcommunityfarm.org/resources/join-our-team/.

- continued on page 36

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
c/o Ed Maltby
30 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SPRINGFIELD, MA
PERMIT NO. 1094

Classified Ads (Continued)

EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: Claas Volto 900T 8 rotor tedder. 29 foot working width. 2 point swivel type hitch with road transport axle. Has been over a quite a few acres but still in good shape. Only selling because we updated to a newer machine. 12,500 or best offer. Contact Nathaniel Stephens, n.stephens4020@gmail.com, 973-459-2691.

Location: Sussex, New Jersey

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: Degelman 45/57 silage blade. 12 foot wide, silage rack, 4 way hydraulics, has mounts for boxcar magnum, mid mount. Contact Michael Lincoln, 585-356-8447, littlelink75@yahoo.com.

Location: Bloomfield, NY

FARM/BUSINESS FOR SALE

BUSINESS FOR SALE: After 20 years in business, i am selling JoJo`s Elixir garlic tincture. Time to retire. Best garlic tincture available. OMRI approved. Substantial inventory. Call 802-349-6251.

Location: Shoreham, VT

